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MELODY QUEEN ASHA BHOSLE NO MORE

Singer dies at 92 in Mumbai after brief illness; Last rites to be held today with state honours

MUMBAI, 12 APRIL

Asha Bhosle, the irrepressible legend who refused to be confined to any one genre and carved her own space alongside sister Lata Mangeshkar, died at a Mumbai hospital on Sunday. She was 92.

Admitted to Breach Candy Hospital on Saturday evening with a chest infection and exhaustion, Bhosle passed away, her granddaughter Zanai Bhosle said. She is survived by her son Anand. The last rites will be held on Monday, with the public allowed to pay respects at Casa Grande, Lower Parel, at 11 am, and the funeral with state hnours at Shivaji Park at 4 pm.

One half of the iconic Mangeshkar duo, Bhosle brought unmatched versatility to Hindi playback singing, lending voice to characters as varied as the lovelorn Meena Kumari in 'Hum Intezar Karenge' and the sensuous Helen in 'Piya Tu Ab To Aaja'. From the infectious energy of 'Aaja, Aaja' to the aching melancholy of 'Chain Se Ham Ko Kabhi', her voice defined generations, effortlessly traversing cabaret, ghazal, pop and classical styles.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said her extraordinary musical journey enriched India's cultural heritage and touched countless hearts across the world.

Bhosle's career spanned over eight decades, with more than 12,000 songs to her credit. She recorded her first song in 1943 at the age of 10 for the Marathi film 'Majha Bal' and continued performing well into the late 2010s, making her among the longest-performing singers in global music history. In 2023, she celebrated her 90th birthday with 'ASHA@90: Live in Concert' in Dubai, where her voice retained its signature elasticity and warmth.

—PTI

Asha Bhosle recorded
12,000 SONGS
in 20 languages over 80 years. In 2011, Asha entered the Guinness World Records for the highest number of studio recordings in music history.

Tributes poured in from across the artistic world. An emotional Usha Uthup said she "couldn't stop crying", calling Bhosle "an amazingly versatile singer" and adding that it felt "unbelievable to speak about Asha ji in the past tense". She described her bond with the legend as one of "admiration and awe".

Composer AR Rahman shared a photograph with Bhosle and wrote that "she lives forever with her voice and aura... what an artist," recalling her enduring influence on generations of musicians. Actor Kajol, who saw Bhosle record a song when she was 19, said, "Ashatai was, is and will always be a legend... as a singer, as a persona and as a human being." —*PTI*

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US-Iran talks collapse after 21-hour negotiations

ISLAMABAD, 12 APRIL

High-stakes negotiations between the United States and Iran collapsed early Sunday after 21 hours, with US Vice President JD Vance saying Tehran refused to commit to abandoning a nuclear weapons path. Iranian officials blamed Washington, insisting on their right to peaceful nuclear energy.

President Donald Trump announced the US Navy would "immediately" begin a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, vowing to interdict any vessel that has paid what he called "illegal tolls" to Iran. He warned that no such ships would have safe passage in international waters, signalling a sharp escalation aimed at dismantling Tehran's leverage over the critical chokepoint.

The strait, through which roughly 20 per cent of global oil supplies pass, has been central to the conflict, with Iran's control effectively restricting Gulf exports and fuelling a surge in global energy prices. US naval movements, including destroyers transiting the waterway ahead of mine-clearing operations, underscore Washington's intent to reopen and secure the route regardless of diplomatic outcomes.

Talks, mediated by Pakistan, ended without clarity on the future of a fragile 14-day ceasefire expiring 22 April. Both sides held firm positions, with Washington demanding verifiable guarantees against nuclear weapons and Tehran denying such ambitions while defending its civilian programme. Iran indicated openness to further dialogue.

The deadlock mirrors earlier failed negotiations and follows six weeks of conflict since 28 February, which has killed thousands across the region and caused widespread infrastructure damage.

Competing proposals underscored the divide: Iran sought an end to the war and control over Hormuz, while US terms focused on a nuclear rollback and restoring free navigation through the vital corridor. —*PTI*

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Jaishankar meets UAE Deputy PM, discusses Iran war

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi to discuss the evolving regional situation and its implications, marking the final stop of his four-day, two-nation tour of Mauritius and the UAE. Jaishankar said he conveyed India's deep appreciation for the efforts of the UAE leadership in ensuring the well-being of the Indian community in the Gulf nation. The minister also expressed confidence that the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership will continue to advance further. Jaishankar arrived in the UAE on Saturday after concluding his visit to Mauritius to attend the 9th Indian Ocean Conference.

Israel wipes out Lebanese villages

Over the last two weeks, while the US and Iran exchanged missiles, barbs and attempted to reach a peace deal, the Israeli military carried out the systematic demolition of entire villages in southern Lebanon. The Guardian said the Israeli military demolished border villages by rigging homes with explosives and detonating them. The Guardian verified three military-posted videos showing detonations in Taybeh, Naqoura, and Deir Seryan. Lebanese media outlets have reported similar mass detonations. Reports cite mass blasts in Lebanese border village. They follow Israel Katz's call to destroy homes, mirroring Gaza tactics where housing destruction has drawn genocide accusations against Israel. —*Agencies*

12 more Indian fishermen arrested by Lankan Navy

COLOMBO, 12 APRIL

The Sri Lankan Navy has arrested at least 12 Indian fishermen and confiscated their trawler for alleged poaching in Sri Lankan waters. An official statement said, "During an operation conducted in the dark hours of 11 April, the Sri Lanka Navy seized one Indian fishing boat and apprehended 12 Indian fishermen while they were poaching off Kovilam in Karainagar Jaffna." On 8 April, the navy had also arrested 10 Indian fishermen in the sea north of Mannar. So far this year, 16 trawlers have been seized and 112 fishermen arrested. The fishermen issue remains tense, with Sri Lankan personnel reportedly firing at Indian fishermen in the Palk Strait. —*PTI*

Nitish Kumar to resign as Bihar CM on 14 April

PATNA, 12 APRIL

Bihar's political transition appears imminent as Chief Minister Nitish Kumar plans to meet his cabinet on 14 April, after which he is expected to resign to facilitate a BJP-led government. A notification confirms the meeting will be at 11am, with Kumar likely to submit his resignation to Governor Syed Ata Hasnain. BJP has appointed Shivraj Singh Chouhan as a "central observer" to oversee the process. Senior JD(U) leader Vijay Kumar Chaudhary said, "the new chief minister will be elected by the NDA, upon the recommendation of the BJP." Speculation suggests Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary is a frontrunner. —*PTI*

Manipur extends internet suspension

IMPHAL, 12 APRIL

The Manipur government has extended the suspension of mobile internet, data services, and VPN access in five districts for two more days. The restrictions follow violence after two people were killed and 29 injured when security forces allegedly fired on a mob protesting the deaths of a five-year-old boy and his six-month-old sister in an explosion. The mob stormed a paramilitary camp in Bishnupur. Protests continue across five districts, with three more civilians killed since. The curfew was relaxed for 10 hours in Imphal West, Imphal East, Bishnupur, Kakching, and Thoubal. Officials expressed concern over disinformation spreading via social media. —*AGENCIES*

159 candidates held over paper leak in J'khand

RANCHI, 12 APRIL

159 candidates appearing for the Jharkhand Excise Constable Competitive Examination (JECCE) 2023 were arrested alongside five alleged gang members following a tip-off regarding a paper leak. JSSC Chairman Prashant Kumar confirmed that police apprehended the group after receiving intelligence that a large number of students had gathered at a building in Rargaon, within the Tamar police station limits, to facilitate the irregularities. "The students were provided four sets of question papers, which were claimed to be the questions of the JECC examination. The question papers provided in printed and digital formats were seized. Those, however, did not match the questions asked in the exam. —*PTI*

India rejects China's 'fictitious' names for Arunachal Pradesh

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

India on Sunday said China's move to assign "fictitious names" to Indian territory to manufacture "baseless narratives" cannot alter the reality but could impact ongoing efforts to normalise bilateral ties. India had reacted sharply when China resorted to renaming certain places in Arunachal Pradesh in May last year, as well as in April 2024.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said New Delhi "categorically rejects" any "mischievous attempts" by the Chinese side to assign such names to places which form part of the Indian territory. Jaiswal said these actions by the Chinese side "detract from ongoing efforts to stabilise and normalise India-China bilateral ties".

"Such attempts by China at introducing false claims and manufacturing baseless narratives cannot alter the undeniable reality that these places and territories, including Arunachal Pradesh, were, are, and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India," he said.

"China should refrain from actions which inject negativity into relations and undermine efforts to create a better understanding," he said.

Relations between the two countries soured following the 2020 eastern Ladakh border row, though both sides have spent the last 18 months attempting to rebuild ties. Recently, however, China issued a new list renaming several locations within Indian territory. Beijing previously released standardised names for six places in "Zangnan" in 2017, fifteen in 2021, and eleven in 2023.

Zangan is the Chinese name for Arunachal Pradesh. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet. —*PTI*

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Cong candidate, six others detained in Bengal gherao case

KOLKATA, 12 APRIL

The NIA on Sunday detained seven people, including a Congress candidate for the West Bengal polls, and arrested a panchayat member of the ISF over the gherao of judicial officers by locals in Malda protesting the deletion of names in the SIR exercise, an officer said.

According to an official, the Congress's Mothabari candidate, Sayem Chowdhury, was picked up along with some of his associates while he was campaigning for the polls in the Alinagar panchayat area.

The NIA has been tasked by the Election Commission to probe into the 1 April geharo incident, following a directive from the Supreme Court, which has censured the West Bengal administration over the issue.

"According to preliminary information, ISF's gram panchayat member Golam Rabbani was arrested based on leads obtained during the interrogation of Mofakkarul Islam, an AIMIM member, who had earlier been held by the state police," the official said.

NIA sources said Rabbani is likely to be brought to Kolkata and produced before a court. —*PTI*

3.6 cr people eligible to cast votes in first phase of Bengal polls

KOLKATA, 12 APRIL

Around 3.6 crore electors in 16 districts are eligible to exercise their franchise in the first phase of the West Bengal assembly elections on 23 April, according to Election Commission data.

The electoral rolls for the first phase comprise 1.84 crore men, 1.75 crore women and 465 persons of the third gender, the EC data released on Saturday showed.

Among the districts, Murshidabad accounts for the highest number of voters at 50.26 lakh, followed by Purba Medinipur (41.60 lakh) and Paschim Medinipur (37.70 lakh). At the other end, Kalimpong has the lowest number of voters at 2.01 lakh.

Polling will be held for 152 seats in the first phase, while 142 seats will witness polling in the second phase on 29 April.

The counting of votes will be held on 4 May.

In northern Bengal, Cooch Behar has 22.63 lakh electors, while Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar have 17.19 lakh and 11.64 lakh voters, respectively. Darjeeling district accounts for 11.10 lakh voters, according to EC data.

Uttar Dinajpur has 19.68 lakh electors, while Dakshin Dinajpur has 11.59 lakh voters. —*PTI*

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PENS LETTER TO MPs

Vital to implement women's quota in 2029: PM

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Prime Minister Modi said it is imperative that the 2029 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections are conducted with women's reservation in place and asked all political parties to come together to pass the amendments to the women's reservation law.

In a letter to the floor leaders of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, ahead of the three-day special sitting of Parliament, Modi also said that any society can progress only when women have the opportunity to progress, make decisions and, more importantly, to lead.

He said that for India to realise its vision of becoming a developed nation, it is essential that women play a greater, active role in this journey.

"After extensive deliberations, we have reached the conclusion that the time has now come to implement the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam in its true spirit across the country. It is imperative that the 2029 Lok Sabha elections and Assembly elections are conducted with women's reservation in place," the Prime Minister said in his letter dated 11 April. Modi said implementation of the Women's Reservation Act in 2029 will infuse new energy into India's democratic institutions and strengthen public trust and it will also ensure greater participation and representation in governance.

The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam is commonly known as the Women's Reservation Act. The Budget Session of Parliament has been extended, and a special three-day sitting of the House has been convened from 16 to 18 April. The proposed to Women's Reservation Act will increase the number of LS seats to 816, of which 273 will be reserved for women. — PTI

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Rotary Club gives cows to women in Kolar

KOLAR, 12 APRIL

The Rotary Club in Kolar distributed 20 cows free of cost to poor rural women, particularly widows, to help them lead self-reliant lives. District Governor BR Sreedhar said the initiative was launched under the Rotary Global Grant project with the support of the Rotary Club to improve the economic condition of women in villages. He said that eligible beneficiaries were provided with financial assistance. In the first phase, 10 cows were distributed in both Yelavara and Vanarashi villages. Rotary deputy governor SV Sudhakar noted that most women in Kolar district support their families and fund their children's education through dairy farming. Their contributions made Kolar one of the top milk-producing districts.—*SALAR NEWS*

— PTI

Dalit activist Muniyappa wins Ambedkar Award

KOLAR, 12 APRIL

CM Muniyappa, senior Dalit activist, journalist, social thinker, and progressive farmer from Kolar district, has been chosen this year for the prestigious Dr BR Ambedkar Award. Muniyappa is among five achievers selected for the honour. The award comprises a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh and a 20-gram gold medal, which will be presented at a government function on Ambedkar Jayanti. The award is conferred by the State Government on the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti. Muniyappa, 66, a resident of Chikkahasala village in Kolar taluk, has dedicated 50 years of his life to struggles and social movements. He is widely recognised across the State as a senior and important leader of the Dalit movement.—*SALAR NEWS*

SDC College students lead anti-drug drive

KOLAR, 12 APRIL

More than 600 students of Smt Danamma Channabasavayya (SDC) College in Bangarpet participated in a rally against narcotic drugs and intoxicating substances on Saturday. The rally aimed to educate youth on the dangers of drug abuse. The programme was conducted under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Ravi, KGF Police Superintendent Shivanshu Rajput and Bangarpet Circle Inspector Ravikumar. The rally was organised by the college's Nasha Mukta Committee. Principal SA Jagadish, faculty members, police sub-nspector Rajanna and others were present. Superintendent of Police Shivanshu Rajput warned students against drug use, promising strict legal action against suppliers and those who coerce others into consumption. He encouragedthe public to report any such illegal activities to the police.—*SALAR NEWS*

Cong MLAs reach Delhi for Cabinet rejig

1st time MLAs demand that five of them be made ministers; leadership issue not in agenda

MANDYA/BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

A delegation of senior Karnataka Congress MLAs travelled to New Delhi on Sunday to lobby the party high command, with their demand for a cabinet reshuffle and opportunities for fresh faces.

First time Congress MLAs have also intensified their push for representation, requesting that at least five of them be made Ministers.

Several senior legislators boarded a flight to Delhi on Sunday. They plan to meet the party high command with a demand that at least 20 of the 40 senior legislators be considered during the rejig.

The senior MLAs, including TB Jayachandra, special representative of the Government of Karnataka in New Delhi, and Assembly Chief Whip Ashok Pattan -- are likely to meet AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge and General Secretaries KC Venugopal and Randeep Singh Surjewala. They are also trying to meet Rahul Gandhi.

Thirty-eight new MLAs recently shot off a letter to the leadership seeking ministerial post for at least five.

Some first and second-time legislators had earlier pressed for cabinet berths and had even held separate dinner meetings to strategise.

Mandya MLA Ravikumar Gowda said it was better to replace some senior Ministers with new faces. Jayachandra said the senior MLAs are voluntarily travelling to Delhi.

Noting that the CM and Deputy CM are aware of the trip, Ashok Pattan said that agenda is only the reshuffle and not any leadership issue.

This comes amid the ongoing power tussle over the Chief Minister's post. This is fuelled by the reported "power-sharing" arrangement between Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar during the government formation in 2023.

Party insiders say if the high command approves the cabinet reshuffle, it would signal that Siddaramaiah will complete the full five-year term.

Karnataka has a sanctioned strength of 34 ministers, including the Chief Minister.

Two cabinet berths are currently vacant following the resignation of B Nagendra over embezzlement and the sacking of KN Rajanna. —*PTI*

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar in Bengaluru —*PTI*

Chairman of ISRO V Narayanan, Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla and chief post master general K Prakash during the release of commemorative postage stamps in Bengaluru on Sunday —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

Film world 'poorer': CM condoles Asha Bhosle's death

BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday condoled Asha Bhosle's death and said the film world has become poorer with the loss of the melody queen.

He said that with her demise, a major link between the old and new generations of music has been severed.

Bhosle died this morning in Mumbai following multiple organ failure, doctors treating her said. She was 92.

She was admitted to Breach Candy Hospital on 11 April due to a chest infection and exhaustion.

"I am deeply saddened by the passing of Asha Bhosle..... with the loss of the melody queen, who entertained ..... over 12,000 songs," Siddaramaiah said in on X.

With a career spanning over eight decades, Asha Bhosle, the younger sister of Lata Mangeshkar, was known for her versatility and sang many memorable melodies, ranging from romantic songs and ghazals to peppy numbers. She had also sung several Kannada songs.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said she redefined versatility in Indian music.

Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy expressed grief, calling Bhosle a "towering legend" whose voice defined generations of Indian music.

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi remembered the Padma Vibhushan awardee as an "unparalleled singer of Indian music." State BJP chief BY Vijayendra also condoled the singer's demise. —*PTI*

India Post releases stamps on ISRO's achivements

BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

The Department of Posts on Sunday released two commemorative postage stamps and souvenir sheets to celebrate the remarkable progress of India's human space programme, led by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

K Prakash, chief postmaster general of the Karnataka Postal Circle, released the commemorative stamps in the presence of V Narayanan, ISRO chairman and group captain Shubhanshu Shukla, the first Indian to reach the International Space Station (ISS).

The commemorative postage stamps and souvenir sheets visually capture India's journey from early achievements, such as the launch of Aryabhata, to its future ambitions in human spaceflight and orbital infrastructure. They also reflect India's rich scientific heritage, symbolised by landmarks such as the Jantar Mantar.

One souvenir sheet showcases the Gaganyaan crew module alongside future aspirations like Bharatiya Antariksha Station, reflecting India's vision of establishing a space station by 2035.

The other sheet draws inspiration from the Axiom 4 mission machine and beautifully connects India's ancient astronomical heritage with modern scientific machines, he said.

The mission patch created by designer Manish Tripathi for Shukla's historic Axiom 4 mission spaceflight was part of the stamp released on the occasion of the International Day of Human Space Flight.

Group Captain Shukla said that space missions or explorations have the potential to transform a nation.

ISRO Chairman Narayanan lauded the service of the postal department for the nation during his address.

Crediting PM Narendra Modi for the human space flight programme, Narayanan asserted that ensuring the safety of astronauts is of utmost priority while preparing for the human space flight missions. —*PTI*

CIVIC WOES

Dogs scour for food in garbage scattered near Ullal ring road at Sir MV Layout in Bengaluru on on Sunday —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

AI, DIGITAL TOOL MUST NOT OVERRIDE JUDICIAL REASONING: SC JUDGE

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Supreme Court judge Justice Rajesh Bindal stated on Sunday that artificial intelligence (AI) and digital tools should serve only as supportive instruments and must not override judicial reasoning.

Justice Bindal raised concerns about open-source platforms and potential risks to data confidentiality, according to a press release from the Supreme Court's eCommittee.

His remarks came during a working session at the two-day national conference on 'Judicial Process Re-engineering and Digital Transformation', organised on April 11-12 by the Supreme Court's eCommittee in partnership with the Department of Justice, Government of India.

The conference comprised five sessions exploring technological integration and judicial process re-engineering.

Chairing the fourth session on the second day, Justice Bindal emphasised technology as an aid, not a substitute, stating, "AI and digital tools must be used as supportive instruments and should not be allowed to override judicial reasoning."

Justice JK Maheshwari underlined the importance of ongoing judicial reforms and technological progress in justice delivery. —*PTI*

Cong accepts Minority chief's resignation

BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

State Congress president DK Shivakumar has accepted the resignation of party Minority Department chairman **K Abdul Jabbar** and dissolved the committees under him.

Jabbar announced his resignation on Saturday, a day after Muslim leaders accused party members of conspiring to defeat the official Davanagere South candidate.

In his letter, Jabbar stated that minority voters and office-bearers are the backbone of the Congress and deserve better. Speaking to reporters, he expressed shock at the party office being used to attack senior minority leaders.

Jabbar, an MLC and aspirant for the Davanagere South ticket, resigned from his post with immediate effect, and the committee was dissolved.

The internal rift within the Congress emerged after Muslim leaders alleged an "internal conspiracy" by senior leaders to undermine the official candidate, Samarth Mallikarjun, despite efforts to include Muslim leaders in decision-making.

- The internal rift emerged after Muslim leaders alleged an internal conspiracy by senior leaders to undermine the official candidate.

Leaders, including Saleem Ahmed, Rizwan Arshad, Yasir Ahmed Khan Pathan, Bilkis Bano, and others, addressed a joint press conference, without naming individuals, but party sources indicated they targeted State Housing Minister BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan, Jabbar, and Naseer Ahmed.

Arshad stated the leadership believed some were dividing votes to help the BJP, but predicted a Congress victory. The party fears Muslim vote splits in the upcoming bypolls for Davanagere South and Bagalkot. —*PTI*

Andhra techie dies in accident in US

PIRIDI, 12 APRIL

A techie from Andhra Pradesh, working in the US, died in an accident at a waterfall in California while on a trip with friends, police said on Sunday.

The deceased, identified as Singireddy Sai Sriharikrishna, was a native of Piridi village in Vizianagaram district.

"The techie died in an accident during a visit to a waterfall in California," the official said.

He is survived by his parents, Singireddy Srinivasa Rao and Ramadevi.

TDP MLA RVSKK Rangarao spoke to Andhra Pradesh NRI Empowerment Minister Kondapalli Srinivas for early repatriation of the body.—*PTI*

FOR BIOCHEMISTRY & HAEMATOLOGY

City's ayurveda institute gets ISO accredition

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

The clinical laboratory at the Central Ayurveda Research Institute (CARI) in Bengaluru has been awarded an ISO 15189:2022 accreditation for biochemistry and haematology, the Union Ayush Ministry said.

CARI has become the first institute under the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) to achieve this accreditation.

This accreditation assures patients that the laboratory delivers accurate, reliable, and safe diagnostic results in line with globally accepted quality standards, the ministry said.

The achievement marks the laboratory's transformation from an entry-level NABL-certified facility to a fully established, accredited centre of excellence, it said.

The accredition assures that the laboratory delivers accurate, reliable and safe diagnostic results in line with global quality standards —*ANI*

Union Ayush Minister Prataprao Jadhav said, "Accreditation to international standards such as ISO 15189:2022 ensures that patients receive reliable and precise diagnostic services, which are essential for effective treatment."

The achievement by CARI Bengaluru showcases how the ministry is transforming Ayush infrastructure into a benchmark of quality and reliability, the minister added.

Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha said the recognition in both biochemistry and haematology is a landmark step in integrating high-quality diagnostics with traditional systems of medicine.

Director General, CCRAS, Rabinarayan Acharya, said the accreditation elevates quality standards, positioning Ayurveda research and innovation at the highest level of scientific rigour and excellence. The laboratory holds NABL accreditation for 50 test parameters across biochemistry and haematology.

Last year it conducted over 1.52 lakh tests. — *PTI*

Govt conducts cleanliness drive

CHIKKABALLAPUR, 12 APRIL

In a continued push for water conservation, 11 kalyanis (traditional step wells mostly near temples) were cleaned across the district on Friday, marking the third week of the ongoing cleanliness drive

Naveen Y Bhat, chief executive officer, Chikkaballapura ZP said the step wells were cleaned as part of 'shramadan' (voluntary service) jointly organized by the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) and the Department of Women and Child Development to restore groundwater levels in the area.

Launched on 23 March, the initiative has seen wide public participation, including elected representatives, NCC/NSS students from schools and colleges, youth, NGOs and volunteers. —*Salar Newsa*

Iran war hits Ludhiana handtool export units

LUDHIANA, 12 APRIL

— AI

The West Asia crisis is affecting export-oriented manufacturing units here, with handtool companies facing challenges such as labour shortages, rising input costs and inadequate gas supply.

The other difficulties they are facing include high interest rates, container availability, increase in shipping and air freights and high insurance cost.

The units are however hopeful that the ceasefire announced between the US and Iran for 15 days will help in ease these challenges.

Disruptions in the movement of oil and gas from West Asia countries have led to an increase in the prices of raw materials such as steel, plastic and rubber.

"Units in Punjab are facing a labour shortage. Workers who had gone to their villages in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar for the Holi festival have not yet returned," said Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President S C Ralhan, who also owns a hand tools unit in the Ludhiana export cluster.

Containers are stuck at various ports or on the high seas due to the conflict. Of the total handtool exports, about 10 per cent go to the UAE, and in March, there were no exports to West Asia. —*PTI*

—PTI

Cash-for-vote: LDF files case against UDF

ALAPPUZHA, 12 APRIL

The LDF has filed a complaint with the Election Commission alleging UDF candidate Reji Cheriyan was involved in cash-for-vote practices during the Assembly election campaign in Kuttanad. The LDF claimed Cheriyan distributed money both directly and via UPI transactions. They submitted a video to the District Returning Officer and Chief Electoral Officer seeking a detailed investigation. Cheriyan contested on a Kerala Congress (Joseph) ticket, facing sitting MLA Thomas K Thomas of the NCP. He responded that he was ready for any probe and denied using UPI, stating, "Let them produce evidence that money was transferred from my accounts, as I do not use UPI." Cheriyan also said the video was from his Facebook page a year ago. *—PTI*

Bihar govt formation to start after 13 April: Jha

PATNA, 12 APRIL

JD(U) national working president Sanjay Kumar Jha announced that the process to form a new government in Bihar would begin after 13 April. This follows Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's election to the Rajya Sabha and his expected resignation. Jha stated, "I think it will roll out after 13 April. But you should speak to those in the state government for more details." Attending Kumar's residence with Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, Jha explained that the new chief minister would be elected by NDA legislators upon BJP's recommendation. Chaudhary added, "The BJP has an important role to play. Once it presents its plan, necessary steps will follow." The BJP leadership will decide the candidate, with speculation about Bihar's first BJP chief minister. *—PTI*

BJP struck ₹1,000 cr deal to beat TMC: Didi

CM says BJP is threatening TMC candidates

KOLKATA, 12 APRIL

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday alleged that the BJP has struck a Rs 1,000-crore deal to unseat the Trinamool Congress from power in the state.

She made the apparent reference to a viral video of Aam Janata Unnayan Party Chief Humayun Kabir, who was purportedly heard saying that he was in close touch with BJP leaders, including Suvendu Adhikari, to unseat Banerjee from power and receiving Rs 200 crore as an advance payment of a Rs 1,000-crore deal to split minority votes to defeat the TMC.

PTI could not independently verify the authenticity of the video.

Banerjee also alleged that central forces deployed in the state for the upcoming polls were "disrespecting" women in the name of conducting searches.

Additionally, Banerjee alleged that the BJP was threatening TMC candidates, including state ministers, seeking their support if the saffron party falls short of the majority mark after the assembly elections.

She also alleged that the BJP government at the Centre wants to carry out a delimitation exercise to trifurcate West Bengal, and that parts of the state could be merged with Bihar or Odisha, and it would result in hardships for the Bengalis living in those areas.

The majority mark in the West Bengal assembly is 148. The BJP won 77 seats in the 2021 polls.

Meanwhile, she alleged that the BJP bribes voters before elections, and called the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls the "country's biggest scam" in recent times.

Banerjee claimed "the BJP bribes voters before the elections. But they forget their promises soon after the polling is over. That was seen in the Bihar elections." *—PTI*

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during a public rally ahead of the Assembly elections, in Bankura, on Sunday *—PTI*

Modi links TMC to 'tukde-tukde' gang

TMC is anti-tribal, anti-women & anti-youth: PM

SILIGURI, 12 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday alleged the "tukde-tukde" gang had threatened to snap the strategic Siliguri Corridor to cut off the Northeast from the rest of the country, and the TMC gave them support from "the streets to Parliament" to serve its "appeasement politics".

Addressing an election rally at the Kawakhali ground in the northern West Bengal city of Siliguri, he described the TMC as an "anti-tribal, anti-women and anti-youth party".

Its appeasement politics have caused untold misery to the state, Modi alleged.

"The TMC, which indulges in appeasement politics, supports such people from the streets to Parliament. That is the real face of TMC," he alleged, addressing his eighth rally in the state since assembly elections were declared.

The Siliguri Corridor, also known as the 'Chicken's Neck', is a narrow stretch of land in the northern part of Bengal, not more than 20-22 km wide, acting as the only land link between mainland India and its eight north-eastern states.

It is a critical and highly vulnerable geopolitical bottleneck bordered by Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and is barely 130 km from the China border.

Terming it "the nation's corridor of defence as well as prosperity", Modi said the Centre was working round the clock to strengthen and develop the region on a massive scale, citing the under-construction Sevoke-Rangpo railway line, connecting Sikkim with Siliguri.

Harping on the TMC's "appeasement politics", the PM alleged that while the Mamata Banerjee government has earmarked Rs 6,000 crore in the state budget for the development of Madrassas, the fund allotted for the entire north Bengal region is "nowhere sufficient". *—PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public meeting ahead of the Assembly elections, in Siliguri, on Sunay *—PTI*

EC transfers 12 police officers in West Bengal ahead of elections

The Election Commission has transferred 12 officers within Kolkata Police and West Bengal Police in the poll-bound state. Several senior officers have been moved from key roles in Kolkata Police. DIG, CID Soma Das Mitra has been appointed as Joint Commissioner (Crime), while Sudip Sarkar, formerly DIG (Personnel), becomes Joint Commissioner (Headquarters). DIG Debasmita Das, of the Special Task Force, is now Joint Commissioner (Intelligence). Deputy Commissioners of North, South, East, and South-East divisions have been replaced, including Ananthanag, Yadav, Ghosh, and Choudhury. Transfers also affected officers across multiple districts and commissionerates. *—PTI*

Supreme Court to hear pleas on West Bengal electoral roll today

The Supreme Court will hear pleas on Monday regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal. The bench, comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi, will also hear a suo motu case on the 'gherao' of seven judicial officers in Malda. The court had ordered the NIA to investigate the incident, noting that "the credibility of bureaucracy was being lowered." The court also reviewed claims and objections, with around 60 lakh cases decided, and urged for uniform procedures across tribunals. *—PTI*

Netaji's kin Chandra Bose joins TMC ahead of West Bengal election

Netaji's grandnephew and former BJP leader **Chandra Bose** joined the TMC, days before the West Bengal assembly elections. He joined the ruling party in the presence of state minister Bratya Basu and TMC MP Kirti Azad, criticising BJP for "divisive politics" and failing to follow Netaji's ideals. Bose stated, "It is not possible to follow Netaji's ideals while being in BJP," and added that BJP "spreads communal hatred" and they must fight to save India. Bose, who contested in 2016 & 2019 polls, left BJP in September 2023, praising CM Mamata Banerjee on multiple occasions. *—PTI*

Kharge writes to PM for all-party meeting

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Congress president **Mallikarjun Kharge** has, in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said that any useful discussion on the women's quota law without details of delimitation and other aspects would be 'impossible'.

The Congress leader demanded that an all-party meeting be called on the matter after the current round of state polls on 29 April.

Kharge said that calling Parliament's special sitting amid state polls reinforces the belief that the government is hurrying the implementation of women's reservation law for "political mileage".

Reiterating his demand for an all-party meeting to discuss the delimitation issue, being linked to the amendments to the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023, Kharge alleged that the 16-18 April special sitting has been called without taking the opposition into confidence. "...your government is seeking our cooperation again without revealing any details on the delimitation going to be done," Kharge's letter to the PM read.

Separately, Trinamool Congress leader in Rajya Sabha Derek O'Brien, in response to PM's appeal to opposition leaders on Sunday to support amendments to women's reservation law, launched a sharp attack on him and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. He charged them with "mocking Parliament" and indulging in theatrics ahead of the elections.

The Union Cabinet has cleared draft bills to operationalise the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam before the 2029 Lok Sabha elections. The proposed amendment seeks to increase the strength from 543 to 816 seats, with 273 seats reserved for women. *—PTI*

BJP issues whip for MPs before spl session

The BJP has issued a three-line whip requiring all MPs to attend the extended Budget session starting Thursday. In a message to all of its MPs, the BJP said, "A Three-Line Whip being issued to all BJP Members in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha from Thursday to Saturday, 16 to 18 April 2026." "All Hon'ble Union Ministers and Members are requested to remain present in the House throughout all the three above mentioned dates," it said. "Presence in the House is mandatory. No leave will be granted. Members are requested to strictly comply with the Whip and ensure their uninterrupted attendance in the House," it added. *—PTI*

Udhayanidhi slams Palaniswami's 'prostration' politics

MANNARGUDI, 12 APRIL

In a scathing attack on the AIADMK leadership, Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister **Udhayanidhi Stalin** on Sunday accused Edappadi K Palaniswami of practising a "politics of prostration".

Stalin accused Palaniswami of repeatedly switching allegiances and sacrificing state rights to cling to power.

Udhayanidhi, campaigning for DMK's Mannargudi and Industries Minister TRB Rajaa, described the Assembly election as a battle between "slaves and self-respect".

"He clung to Jayalalithaa's feet, then Sasikala's, then Dhinakaran's, and now he clings to Modi's." Stalin accused Palaniswami of betraying his political mentors, contrasting this with the DMK's commitment to defending Tamil Nadu's autonomy against central interference

Responding to the alleged "lack of experience", Udhayanidhi said he did not have the "experience" of "clinging to superiors for posts." "I don't have the experience of fear". Udhayanidhi warned that AIADMK-BJP alliance would erode Tamil Nadu's hard-won rights *—PTI*

'Keralam BJP's Sobha involved in cash-for-vote'

ALAPPUZHA, 12 APRIL

Suspended BJP leader Bindu Vinayakumar on Sunday alleged that party leader Sobha Surendran was involved in 'cash-for-vote' during the 2024 Lok Sabha election in Alappuzha.

Earlier, both the UDF and the LDF had raised allegations against Surendran over purported cash-for-vote activities during the recent Assembly election campaign in Palakkad.

A video related to the allegations had surfaced, prompting a probe by the Election Commission and the police.

Vinayakumar, former BJP Alappuzha north district vice-president, had recently lodged a police complaint alleging that Surendran threatened her in connection with the cash-for-vote accusations.

Following her allegations, the BJP suspended Vinayakumar.

Speaking to reporters, she said she had known Surendran since the latter contested the Lok Sabha election in Alappuzha.

"It is well known that she was involved in fund misappropriation and the distribution of money during the election in Alappuzha. Now people in Palakkad have also realised it," she alleged.

Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami has sent a legal notice to Surendran for accusing the organisation of killing RSS worker Sreenivasan in Palakkad. *—PTI*

'RAGA FIGHTING FOR HIS EXISTENCE'

Cong planning to remove Rahul over poll losses, says Fadnavis

NAGPUR/MUMBAI, 12 APRIL

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday hit out at Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, claiming that an atmosphere is brewing in the Congress to oust him, as he is unable to ensure poll wins for the party.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme in Nagpur, Fadnavis said that Gandhi is only fighting for his own existence and to save his leadership from the continuous defeat he is facing.

He said that Gandhi made such statements to divert attention from the conflict within his party.

BIG RULING PARTY MAY POACH OWN ALLIES

NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar on Sunday claimed that contrary to reports of attempts to "poach" Opposition legislators in Maharashtra, a major ruling party in the Mahayuti coalition could instead turn focus on its own allies.

There was credible information that by the end of next month, a "big party in power" may engineer defections within the ruling alliance, Pawar claimed in an apparent swipe at the ruling BJP, and cautioned smaller partners to remain vigilant.

Over the past few days, there has been a buzz that the Shiv Sena has secretly launched 'Operation Tiger' in a bid to induce defections among leaders of the Opposition Shiv Sena (UBT) led by former CM Uddhav Thackeray.

CONG LEADER BACKS SHARAD PAWAR

Maharashtra Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant supported NCP (SP) Chief Sharad Pawar over his remarks about regressive elements entering the Warkari sect, alleging attempts to infiltrate it through "self-styled godmen and divisive preachers". The term 'Warkari' is used for devotees of Lord Vitthal who undertake an annual pilgrimage on foot to the temple town of Pandharpur in state. *—PTI*

Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari, Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis & others during a review meeting in Nagpur *—PTI*

RSS-BJP's objective to end Constitution: RaGa

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Ahead of BR Ambedkar's birth anniversary on 14 April, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi flagged off the 'Run For Ambedkar, Run For Constitution' marathon on Sunday, using the occasion to launch a scathing attack on the RSS-BJP for allegedly attempting to dismantle the Constitution to undermine social equality.

"Ambedkar's core message was the Constitution, without which India would not exist," said Rahul Gandhi at the Mandi House marathon. "The RSS-BJP aims to dismantle it because they oppose equality for all Indians."

"Whatever RSS-BJP do, they even bow before Ambedkar ji's statue, but their objective is to finish off the Constitution. Our objective is to protect the Constitution and strengthen the Constitution," Gandhi said in Lok Sabha.

"We want the Constitution and its protection to reach every corner of the country," Gandhi said, flagging off the Congress SC Department's 'Run for Ambedkar, Run for Constitution' from Mandi House. In a Facebook post, he said the run reflects the party's commitment to Ambedkar's ideals and the Constitution of India. *—PTI*

Congress MP and Lok Sabha LoP Rahul Gandhi flags off the 'Run for Ambedkar, Run for Constitution' marathon organised by the AICC, at Mandi House, in New Delhi *—PTI*

Kunki Chowdhury summoned by police in poll-related case

GUWAHATI, 12 APRIL

Assam Jatiya Parishad candidate for Guwahati Central, Kunki Chowdhury, appeared at Panbazar Police Station on Sunday after being summoned in an election-related case, with her party accusing Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of using police pressure after sensing defeat in the constituency.

The party claimed that the ruling party is rattled after seeing that the mandate has gone against them in the constituency.

She was served a notice on Saturday and asked to appear before police on Sunday before 11am, noting that failing to do so would render her liable for arrest.

A case was filed against Chowdhury and her campaign manager, Sandeep Yadav, by a BJP activist Naba Kumar Lahkar on the day of polling on 9 April, alleging the duo violated the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and hampered the conduct of free-and-fair elections.

The MCC is in force now, and when the Chief Secretary is running the government, how the Chief Minister can reportedly say that he has sent police, asked the legal expert. *—PTI*

—PTI

Mathura boat tragedy toll rises to 13

MATHURA, 12 APRIL

With the recovery of two more bodies on Sunday the death toll in the boat capsize incident in the Yamuna river in Mathura has climbed to 13 officials said Search for three more missing persons is underway SP Rural Suresh Chandra Rawat said bodies of Dinki Bansal and Rishabh Sharma were recovered Incident occurred Friday when boat carrying over two dozen tourists from Punjab hit pontoon drum near Kesi Ghat Teams NDRF SDRF police searching but strong currents hinder Police arrested boatman Pappu and contractor Narayan Sharma case under section 105 BNS registered for negligence and safety violations probe continues. —*PTI*

Keralam woman on way to hospital sexually harassed

ALAPPUZHA, 12 APRIL

A case has been registered after a woman injured in an accident was allegedly sexually harassed while being taken to hospital at Kayamkulam. Police said a case was registered against Sinil Sabad following a complaint by the 25-year-old woman. The accident occurred April 4 when a vehicle hit the median. Police said Sabad helped to shift the injured woman but the complainant alleged he made advances and touched her offensively. After reaching hospital doctors alerted the police. The victim alleged lapses saying no detailed statement recorded or medical exam done. Police said the accused was questioned and released and a probe is on. Police Chief Ravada A Chandrasekhar sought a report. An inquiry was also ordered. —*PTI*

—PTI

Amarnath Yatra to begin on 3 July, end on 28 August

JAMMU, 12 APRIL

The annual pilgrimage to the holy cave shrine of Amarnath in south Kashmir will commence on 3 July and conclude on 28 August Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said Pilgrims aged between 13 and 70 can undertake the yatra and registrations will begin from 15 April he said Dates decided at meeting of Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board "The Amarnath Yatra will commence on 3 July and conclude on 28 August" Sinha said. Registration mandatory through banks and online First puja on 19 June. Pilgrimage routes include Pahalgam and Baltal tracks. Arrangements are underway for the smooth conduct this year. —*PTI*

J&K police unravels LeT's pan-India logistical web

LeT agents helped ultras to get Aadhaar, PAN, voter IDs

SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Widening its crackdown on the inter-state network of the Lashkar-e-Taiba terror group, the J&K police, in coordination with Central Intelligence agencies, has detained several people from Haryana and Rajasthan for allegedly facilitating the acquisition of fraudulent identities, including passports, by terrorists.

Officials said on Sunday that the detained persons provided critical logistical support to terrorists by making documents like Aadhaar, PAN cards and voter ID cards.

The investigation was spearheaded by the Srinagar Police, which generated the intelligence. However, as the scale of the operation and its wider security ramifications became clear, the case was immediately escalated to involve Central agencies and police forces of other states to dismantle the network spanning multiple areas of the country.

The J&K police operation unveiled a deep-rooted terror network with connections across India and led to the arrest of key terrorists —*PTI*

One of the terrorists, Umar alias 'Kharghosh' (rabbit), had managed to procure a passport and fled to Indonesia, from where he is believed to have used another forged travel document and went to a Gulf country, the officials said.

Umar, a resident of Karachi, had infiltrated into India after 2012 and fled using the forged passport, procured from Jaipur in Rajasthan, in 2024, the officials said.

- One of the terrorists, Umar alias 'Kharghosh' (rabbit), had managed to procure a passport and fled to Indonesia, from where he used another forged travel document to go to a Gulf country

These details emerged after the Srinagar police busted an interstate LeT module and arrested five people, including a Pakistani terrorist, Abdullah alias Abu Hureira, who had been on the run for 16 years and had successfully established bases outside the UT.

The arrest of Abdullah, along with another Pakistani national Usman, was another major success for the Srinagar police. — *PTI*

MISSING FOR 8 MONTHS

Woman's body found, 28 cops suspended

BOKARO, 12 APRIL

Twenty-eight police officials have been suspended after the skeletal remains of an 18-year-old woman, missing for eight months, were recovered in Jharkhand's Bokaro district.

The remains, including bones and hair, were found on Saturday in a secluded area near Chas College, SP Harvinder Singh said on Sunday. Police said the victim and the suspect had known each other for nearly three years. The woman had allegedly been pressuring him to marry her, which, according to the suspect, led him to kill her. On 21 July 2025, when the victim went to Chas College to seek admission to an undergraduate course, the suspect met her there and took her to an isolated spot about 1.5 km away, Singh said. He allegedly stabbed her to death, hid the body in nearby bushes and disposed of the blood-stained knife on his way back.

The suspect led investigators to the crime scene, where the police recovered 19 bones, strands of hair, the victim's clothes and the weapon. The victim's mother had lodged a complaint on 24 July, alleging that her daughter had been kidnapped. — *PTI*

- SP Harvinder said the victim and the suspect had known each other for three years. The woman had been pressuring him to marry her, which led the suspect, to kill her

163 trafficked boys rescued from train in MP's Katni

KATNI, 12 APRIL

Around 163 minor boys allegedly trafficked from Bihar to Maharashtra were rescued from an express train in Madhya Pradesh's Katni district by the railway police, officials said on Sunday.

The children, aged between six and 13, were being transported from Bihar for work in Latur when the RPF and the GRP intercepted them on Saturday night based on a tip-off from the Child Welfare Committee.

The RPF and the Government Railway Police (GRP) detained eight persons, who were travelling with the boys without proper tickets and documents on the Patna-Purna Express at Katni railway station.

The children were being taken from the Araria region in Bihar to Latur in Maharashtra, RPF Katni inspector Virendra Singh said. The RPF received a tip off about the trafficking of children and grew suspicious after they found no travel documents, he said. Singh said the GRP registered a case under section 143(4) (trafficking of a child below the age of 18) of the BNS. — *PTI*

Nashik staffers accused of harassment suspended: TCS

MUMBAI, 12 APRIL

IT major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) said on Sunday that it has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards any kind of harassment and confirmed the suspension of employees allegedly involved in sexual harassment at its Nashik centre.

The clarification comes in the context of allegations of sexual harassment and forced religious conversion by eight female employees at the company's Nashik centre.

Earlier this week, the police constituted a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the complaints lodged by eight employees, who claimed that senior colleagues mentally and sexually harassed them, and that the human resources department turned a deaf ear to their complaints.

The police have arrested seven people, including the company's female HR manager.

TCS confirmed the suspension of its employees allegedly involved in sexual harassment at its Nashik centre —*PTI*

The company, in a statement, said, "The TCS has a long-standing zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and coercion of any form. We have always ensured the highest standards of safety of our employees. As soon as we became aware of the matter in Nashik, we took swift action."

The employees being investigated have been suspended pending enquiry, the company's spokesperson said, adding that the firm is cooperating with law enforcement and any further action will be based on the investigation's conclusion. — *PTI*

Half-burnt bodies of woman, kid found in WB

KOLKATA, 12 APRIL

The half-burnt bodies of a woman and her daughter were found in a trunk in their house in Sandeshkhali in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district, police said on Sunday.

The incident came to light late on Saturday, and the bodies were recovered by the police on Sunday morning, they said.

"Prima facie, it appears to be a case of murder followed by an attempt to destroy evidence. However, all possible angles including domestic discord or any other possibility, are being thoroughly examined," a police officer said.

The woman's husband is missing, and a search is underway for him, police told the media.

The incident triggered panic in the area, following which police were deployed to maintain law and order. — *PTI*

Kamra points to Thackeray's Indira cartoon, defends himself

MUMBAI, 12 APRIL

Questioning the Maharashtra legislature's action against him, stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra cited Bal Thackeray's cartoon criticising former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and argued that the late Shiv Sena supremo never faced privilege proceedings.

Kamra has been served with a breach of privilege notice over his satirical song targeting Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, who claims to be carrying forward the political legacy of Bal Thackeray.

The comedian shared on X a screenshot of his recent written deposition submitted to the legislature's privileges committee, in which he also included Bal Thackeray's cartoon, while responding to the remarks of Shiv Sena leader Pratap Sarnaik, a minister.

Reacting to the privilege proceedings, Sarnaik on Saturday told reporters that, "Kunal Kamra's breach of privilege motion has been referred to a committee by members of the assembly, and he is giving his statement through that committee."

The cartoon of Indira Gandhi drawn by former Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray —*X/ KUNAL KAMRA*

"But if his business is to sing songs about Eknath Shinde in a different way, then he should also understand the approach of Shiv Sainiks. He should understand how Shiv Sainiks work, and he can learn about it if he wants," the minister added.

Kamra reposted Sarnaik's video on X along with a portion of his written reply, defending political satire and questioning the use of legislative privilege against comedians.

"Over the last year, I have faced multiple proceedings for a joke that I made about a fight for the political legacy of one of India's most fiery and acclaimed political cartoonists, Balasaheb Thackeray," Kamra said in his deposition.

He noted that Bal Thackeray had mocked many VIPs including prime ministers, without facing privilege.

Referring to the cartoon targeting Indira Gandhi, Kamra argued that defending Bal Thackeray's political legacy should include protecting the freedom of cartoonists and satirists.

He expressed the hope that the proceedings would highlight "little-known provisions of the Constitution" relating to legislative privilege that could be used by elected leaders to curb citizens' freedoms. — *PTI*

Ambedkar statue damaged, R'sthan villagers protest

JAIPUR, 12 APRIL

A statue of BR Ambedkar was found damaged in the Khambal village of Rajasthan's Sirohi district, triggering protests by locals, police said on Sunday

According to officials, the hand of the statue was found damaged on Sunday morning.

CCTV footage from nearby areas is being examined to identify the accused.

A senior police official said teams have been set up to trace those involved in the incident.

Soon after the incident, several locals gathered on the spot and held a protest.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate Hari Singh Deval also visited the site and reviewed the situation. He said efforts were being made to identify and arrest the culprits. — *PTI*

Puri temple mulls action against ISKCON festivals

PURI, 12 APRIL

Raising concern over what they termed ISKCON's "deliberate deviations" from traditional practices, the authorities at the Jagannath temple in Odisha's Puri said Prime Minister Modi has been apprised of it, and legal recourse is being considered.

At a meeting of the 'Aikya Sthapana Mandali', chaired by Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb, who heads the Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee (SJTMC), concerns were voiced over ISKCON organising Rath Yatra and Snan Yatra at dates not aligned with prescribed religious tithis.

Addressing reporters, Deb said such practices have hurt the sentiments of millions of devotees of Lord Jagannath.

"We have apprised the prime minister about how centuries-old traditions are being ignored by organising 'off-calendar' Rath Yatras. Taking legal recourse may be our last option," he said.

The temple authorities also plan to take up the matter with the Union Ministries of External Affairs and Culture, besides writing again to ISKCON's headquarters in Mayapur. — *PTI*

- We have apprised the prime minister about how centuries-old traditions are being ignored by organising 'off-calendar' Rath Yatras. Taking legal recourse could be our last option, Gajapati Maharaja Deb said

STUDYING SPREE

Ex-soldier bags 138 degrees, diplomas

JAIPUR, 12 APRIL

An ex-serviceman from Rajasthan has amassed 138 degrees, diplomas and certificates.

Dashrath Singh, a resident of Jhunjhunu district, was recently awarded his latest qualification at the IGNOU convocation after he completed a Master's in Vedic Studies with distinction.

The 55-year-old claims to have set 11 world records, including recognitions from the India Book of Records, Golden Book of World Records, Asia Book of Records, and International Book of Records in the field of education.

"After completing Class 10, college seemed like a distant dream due to financial constraints," says Singh.

Born in the Khirod village of Nawalgarh tehsil in the district, which is known for sending its youth to the armed forces, he joined the Army in 1988. He served as an NCO for 16 years and retired in 2004.

Dashrath Singh Shekhawat of Jhunjhunu district in Rajasthan, poses for photographs with his degrees, diplomas and other certificates —*PTI*

- Dashrath claims to have set 11 world records, including recognitions from the India Book of Records, Golden Book of World Records and Asia Book of Records

Singh, who hails from a farming family, says he always felt his education was "incomplete."

"I first obtained a B.Com degree, followed by LLB, LLM, BJMC and B.Ed as a regular student, while pursuing other degress through IGNOU, Jain Vishva Bharati Institute, and private universities," says Singh. So far, he has earned three PhDs, seven undergraduate degrees, 46 PG degrees, 23 diplomas, seven military studies degrees, and 52 certificates.

"After retirement, I studied law," says Singh, who took up a legal advisor post at the Army's Sapta Shakti Command. — *PTI*

Faculty face probe in Kannur student's death

KANNUR, 12 APRIL

Police have launched a probe against faculty members of Kannur Dental College after a first-year student died after falling from a building in a suspected suicide officials said on Sunday.

Chakkarakkal police who registered a case of unnatural death initiated the probe after parents and friends alleged harassment of the deceased identified as Nithin Raj RL, 22, from Uzhamalackal Puthukulangara in Thiruvananthapuram.

Plice said Raj was found critically injured near the medical college block on 10 April and later succumbed.

The college suspended MK Ram and KT Sangeetha Nambiar. Police said Nithin Raj had sent audio messages alleging threats by teachers and academic pressure

suspended MK Ram and KT Sangeetha Nambiar. Police said Raj sent audio alleging threats and academic pressure. Officials said the probe collected digital evidence and statements. His father said he was "verbally harassed" over his social background. His sister said he was called a "slum dog" by some of his teachers. — *PTI*

UP man, in-laws accused of killing wife's unborn kids

BHADOHI, 12 APRIL

A woman's husband and two of her in-laws have been booked for allegedly killing her unborn children twice through assault during her pregnancies, police said on Sunday. The case against the three was registered at Gopiganj police station following a written complaint by Aradhana Shukla at a 'Jan Sunvai' programme on Saturday.

The accused are her husband Abhinesh Shukla, his mother Geeta Devi, and his brother-Pradeep. SP Tyagi said that Aradhana married Abhinesh of Bhanupur Siyarha village on 21 May 2022. Despite receiving substantial dowry, the accused demanded an additional Rs 10 lakh, and when refused, subjected her to harassment. — *PTI*

8 SEPTEMBER, 1933 — 12 APRIL, 2026

Asha Bhosle

INDIA'S VOICE FOR EVERY MOOD FALLS SILENT

Hers was the voice of sass and soul that struck a million emotive chords down generations, the one they woke up to in the morning, tuned into at night, romanced and mourned loves that were never to be and yes, jived and rock and rolled to.

Asha Bhosle was 92. One half of the Mangeshkar sisters who together became the voices that not just embodied Hindi singing for close to seven decades but an India keeping step with the global times.

VERSATILITY ACROSS GENRES

Asha was the one who got listeners dancing away to the breathless 'Aaja, Aaja' and also sit back in reflective pause with the classical 'Justuju Jiski Hai'. Both performed with equal felicity.

What set Asha apart was not just longevity – she sang for more than eight decades -- but her reinvention of herself. From black-and-white cinema to global stages, from vinyl to streaming, she stayed relevant by constantly evolving her sound. From Meena Kumari and Madhubala to Kajol and Urmila Matondkar, the roster of heroines kept changing. Asha stayed on as a continuum linking the past to the present.

The images will live on. The singing star, always in a sari, a bindi firmly in place and her hair tied neatly in a bun. And gamely dancing to 'Ek Mein Aur Ek Tu' well into her 80s and most memorably to 'Tauba, Tauba', recreating Vicky Kaushal's signature hook step at a Dubai concert in 2024. With an estimated 12,000 songs, mostly in Hindi but also in some 20 other languages, it's an incredible career, impossible to take in at one go.

EARLY LIFE AND FIRST STEPS IN MUSIC

For Asha and her siblings – Lata, Usha, Meena and Hridayanath – music was not just their calling but also perhaps their destiny. While Lata and Usha were singers, Meena and Hridayanath are composers.

Born in 1933, Asha was trained in classical music by her father, Dinanath Mangeshkar, just as her brothers and sisters. She recorded her first song at just 10 after her father's death. It was the Marathi song 'Chala Chala Nav Bala' for 'Majha Bal' in 1943. The Hindi film debut was 'Saawan Aaya' for 'Chunariya' in 1948. Her early years in the industry were marked by struggle: typecast into singing for second-tier productions and overshadowed by her already famous sister.

Asha's career took an upswing when OP Nayyar gave her a break in 'Naya Daur' where she sang for Vyjayanthimala

BREAKTHROUGH AND RISE TO FAME

But Asha did something unexpected. She reinvented the very idea of a playback singer.

Her breakthrough came in the 1950s, especially through her bold and peppy songs with composer OP Nayyar. Her career took an upswing when Nayyar gave her a break in 'Naya Daur' where she sang for Vyjayanthimala. The song was 'Maang Ke Saath Tumhara'. It went on to open many doors in the industry for Asha who sang in 'Waqt' and 'Gumraah' with music director Ravi.

At a time when playback singing leaned heavily toward classical purity, Asha introduced flair, attitude, and a modern edge. She became the voice of club songs, cabaret numbers, and youthful romance.

TURNING POINT IN CAREER

The next phase of her career was even more transformative. Her partnership with RD Burman redefined Hindi film music in the 1960s and 70s. Songs like 'Piya Tu Ab To Aaja' and 'Dum Maro Dum' showcased her unmatched versatility. Her voice could be sensuous, playful, rebellious, romantic, plaintive, but always deeply expressive. Asha mastered ghazals ('Dil Cheez Kya Hai'), classical-based compositions, pop, and even international collaborations. Her achievements are formidable: multiple National Film Awards, numerous Filmfare Awards, and the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, India's highest recognition in cinema. She also received the Padma Vibhushan.

'Umrao Jaan' and 'Rangeela', two movies across decades are a standout example of her mastery over genres – 'Dil Cheez...' at one end of the spectrum and 'Tanha Tanha"'on the other.

"I think I've given a lot to music. I've sung different Indian songs. I feel good that I've come out of difficult times, many times I felt I would not be able to survive (but I did). "…I faced difficulties but today when I look back, it all looks 'mazedar' as I came out of it," she told PTI in 2023. Some songs perhaps stand out more than others in the formidable Asha playbook. 'Maang Ke Saath', 'Abhi Na Jao Chhod Kar', 'Piya Tu Ab Toh Aaja', 'Dum Maaro Dum' and 'Mera Kucch Saman' being just some of them.

BEYOND CINEMA: GLOBAL AND INDIE VENTURES

But then Asha was never content to be only a voice for the movies.

In the 1990s, she made waves internationally, lending her voice to Boy George's "Bow Down Mister" and singing with boy band Code Red.

Her first Grammy nomination that year came for "Legacy", a classical album recorded with sarod maestro Ustad Ali Akbar Khan.

She embraced Indipop with the same fearlessness. Her 1997 non-film album 'Jaanam Samjha Karo', composed by Leslie Lewis, featured the breezy 'Raat Shabnami' that became an instant hit and won her MTV and Channel V awards, introducing her to a generation of listeners who had grown up on a diet of remixes. She also collaborated with Adnan Sami on 'Kabhi To Nazar Milao' and with Australian cricketer Brett Lee on 'You Are the One for Me' and 'Haan Main Tumhara Hoon'. Constantly reinventing herself, Asha made her presence felt on social media as well. Her Instagram account has over 7.5 lakh followers.

TWO LEGENDS, TWO DISTINCT JOURNEYS

Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle during a recording session for 'Basant Bahar'

It should be difficult to separate the careers of Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle, but it is not. Two voices that ruled the subcontinent, they represented a shared cultural identity beyond borders. Both lived to 92. While Lata achieved stardom first, the feisty Asha followed, not just sharing the spotlight but expanding it with remarkable versatility and flair.

"Humari saans nahi hoti toh aadmi mar jata hai, mere liye music meri saans hai," Asha once said, describing music as essential as breath.

Their relationship was often framed as a rivalry, though both largely dismissed such claims. Growing up in Lata's shadow, Asha was determined to forge her own identity rather than remain "Lata's sister". Industry gossip fuelled speculation, but Asha maintained that "blood is thicker than water".

A turning point came when she realised her voice was being mistaken for Lata's. She reinvented herself, embracing Western styles, cabaret, ghazals and qawwalis—genres her sister rarely explored.

Despite their distinct paths, they collaborated on songs like 'Main Chali Main Chali' ('Padosan', 1968) and 'Chhap Tilak Sab' ('Main Tulsi Tere Aangan Ki', 1978). The 1998 film 'Saaz' drew from rivalry rumours, which Asha later called exaggerated. —*PTI*

In 2024, she recreated the signature hook step from 'Tauba Tauba' during a concert in Dubai

1ST INDIAN TO BE NOMINATED TO GRAMMYS

Asha was the first Indian singer nominated for a Grammy Award, though she never won. She received two nominations: in 1997 for Best World Music Album for 'Legacy', a collaboration with Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, and in 2006 for Best Contemporary World Music Album for 'You've Stolen My Heart', songs From RD Burman's 'Bollywood' with the Kronos Quartet'.

HOW ASHA BHOSLE'S JINGLES REVOLUTIONISED AD INDUSTRY

Asha also lent her voice to advertising jingles and turning them into tunes people remembered and hummed. In 1964, she helped transform Indian advertising with 'Phool Ke Samman Hai', composed by Ravi and written by Jan Nisar Akhtar for Hindustan Lever's Himalaya Bouquet soap and talcum powder. Decades later, in 2002, she reshaped the space again with 'Rasila Rozana Utsav', a three-minute jingle for Rasna. Her voice made advertisements feel like stories, admired for their poetic quality while strengthening brand recall through music.

SOME OF HER EVERGREEN HITS

Asha and Kishore Kumar were a legendary duo whose versatile voices defined the 'Golden Era'

1. 'In Aankhon Ki Masti Ke' from 'Umrao Jaan' (1981)	2. .'Piya Tu Ab To Aaja' from 'Caravan' (1971)	3. 'O Mere Sona Re' from 'Teesri Manzil' (1966)	4. 'Dum Maro Dum' from 'Hare Rama Hare Krishna' (1971)	5. 'Chura Liya Hai Tumne' from 'Yaadon Ki Baaraat' (1973)
6. 'Abhi Na Jao Chhod Kar' from 'Hum Dono' (1961)	7. 'Do Lafzon Ki Hai Dil Ki Kahani' from 'The Great Gambler' (1979)	8. 'O Haseena Zulfonwaali' from 'Teesri Manzil' (1966)	9. 'Rangeela Re' from 'Rangeela' (1995)	10. 'Radha Kaise Na Jale' from 'Lagaan' (2001)

A LOVE STORY MADE IN MUSIC

The love story of Asha Bhosle and Rahul Dev Burman began in a recording studio and unfolded through music, creating some of Hindi cinema's most enduring songs. Their first meeting dates back to the mid-1950s, when a young Burman, son of composer Sachin Dev Burman, visited a studio with his father. A bespectacled college boy then, he was in awe of Bhosle and asked for her autograph, having heard her Marathi songs on the radio. Years later, their professional partnership took off with Teesri Manzil (1966). Songs like 'Aaja Aaja Main Hoon Pyar Tera' marked Burman's breakthrough and the start of a creative collaboration that reshaped Hindi film music. Both had endured troubled first marriages. Bhosle had eloped at 16 with Ganpatrao Bhosle in 1949, a relationship she later described as abusive, returning home with two children and pregnant with a third. Burman had separated from his wife Rita Patel in 1971. Their bond deepened over time, though Bhosle initially resisted Burman's repeated proposals, wary of remarriage. He persisted, often expressing admiration for her voice, which he said had captivated him. Despite opposition from his family, particularly over their age difference, Burman, fondly known as Pancham Da, married Bhosle in 1980.

Asha and the new gen Gorillaz

Even in her final years, Asha kept pace with contemporary music, collaborating with newer global acts. Her last major project in March, 'The Shadowy Light on The Mountain', featured Gorillaz — a genre-blending virtual band known for mixing alternative, electronic and world music. The track introduced Bhosle to a younger international audience beyond Bollywood. She recorded alongside artists such Anoushka Shankar and Gruff Rhys.

The entrepreneur

Beyond music, Asha Bhosle built a successful culinary venture with her restaurant chain, Asha's, serving North-West Indian cuisine across Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the UK. She opened the first outlet in WAFI, Dubai, in 2002, turning her passion for food into a global brand. Over two decades, the chain expanded steadily. According to The Economic Times, her net worth in 2026 was about 100 crore, placing her among India's richest female singers.

— PTI

SL shuts firm for supplying low grade coal

COLOMBO, 12 APRIL

Sri Lankan authorities sealed the state-owned Lanka Coal Company's headquarters here amid accusations of supplying low-grade coal, causing massive losses to the island nation, officials said. The Crime Investigation Department (CID) sealed the office on Saturday following a complaint filed by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's Secretary, demanding a probe into all coal imports for power generation since 2009. Security is deployed at the office premises, the officials said. An audit report on the imports had cited irregularities in procedures, such as changing tender deadlines and alleged favour to certain suppliers. Lanka Coal told a parliamentary committee that a supplier was earlier fined heavily for substandard supplies. —*PTI*

Palestinian man killed in West Bank amid Iran war

TEL AVIV, 12 APRIL

A Palestinian man was killed on Saturday, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, in an ongoing wave of violence in the West Bank that has claimed the lives of 22 people since the start of the Iran war. Israel's military said it responded to a violent riot in the village of Deir Jarir, northeast of Ramallah. A soldier in the reserves shot a Palestinian, identified as Ali Majed Hamadneh, 23, who was evacuated for medical treatment and later died at the hospital. So far this year, 33 Palestinians have been killed, two thirds during the Iran war in March. Settlers have killed at least eight of the Palestinians.—*PTI*

Benin votes for new president after Talon quits

DAKAR SENEGAL 12 APRIL

Voters in Benin cast ballots Sunday to choose a successor to President Patrice Talon who is stepping down after a decade in power leaving a mixed legacy of economic growth a growing jihadi insurgency in the north and the suppression of opposition critics Romuald Wadagni the 49-year-old finance minister and governing coalition standard-bearer is considered Talon's anointed successor He is challenged by Paul Hounkpe the sole opposition candidate Nearly 8 million are registered to vote across more than 17000 polling stations Analysts expect Wadagni to win after opposition failed threshold leaving allied parties controlling parliament Results are expected within 48 hours polls close at 4pm.—*PTI*

Talks failed over US' many demands: Iran

Iran Speaker says can't trust US; Tehran claims the two nations remain divided on '2 or 3 issues'

ISLAMABAD, 12 APRIL

High-stakes talks between Iran and the United States in Islamabad ended without an agreement on Sunday, with Tehran blaming "excessive demands" by Washington and citing a lack of trust as a key obstacle.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei said the two sides reached some understandings during the intensive 24–25 hour negotiations but remained divided on "two or three key issues". He described the engagement as the longest round of talks in the past year and noted that discussions continued nonstop with messages exchanged through Pakistani mediators.

"Diplomacy never ends," Baqaei said, adding that negotiations were held in an atmosphere of "mistrust, suspicion and doubt" following 40 days of what he termed an "imposed war" and a fragile ceasefire.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at a meeting with Iranian delegation led by Speaker of the Iranian Consultative Assembly Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf in Islamabad. —*PTI*

Iran's chief negotiator and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said the US "failed to gain the trust" of the Iranian delegation despite Tehran presenting "forward-looking initiatives". He reiterated that Iran entered the talks with "good faith and will" but remained wary due to past conflicts and what he described as repeated breaches of commitments by Washington.

Iranian officials said the agenda expanded beyond core nuclear concerns to include sensitive regional issues such as control of the Strait of Hormuz and broader West Asian security dynamics. Tehran had also put forward a 10-point proposal that included demands for lifting sanctions, withdrawal of US forces from the region, and recognition of Iran's strategic rights.

The negotiations were the first direct, high-level engagement between the two countries since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, underscoring their significance despite the lack of a breakthrough.

Iran also rejected what it called coercive negotiating tactics, arguing that proposals framed as a "final offer" could not be imposed unilaterally. Officials maintained that Tehran would not concede at the negotiating table what it had resisted on the battlefield.

Baqaei said consultations with regional partners would continue, emphasising that diplomacy remains a key pillar alongside military preparedness in safeguarding national interests. —*PTI*

Trump warns China against providing air defence to Iran

US President Donald Trump on Saturday warned China it would face "big problems" if it ships weapons to Iran, amid rising concerns that the fragile two-week ceasefire between Washington and Tehran may not hold. Reports suggest China could ship advanced air defence systems to Iran covertly. China denied these allegations. The US maintains a strong military presence near Iran, which seeks to rebuild defences after recent strikes. Any Chinese military support would escalate tensions ahead of Trump's planned China visit. Despite heavy sanctions, Iran relies on China and Russia for strategic backing.

Iran denies claims that US vessels crossed Hormuz

Iran's military command denied US claims that two Navy destroyers transited the Strait of Hormuz, with state media reporting a spokesperson's statement that "initiative over the passage of any vessel rests with the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran." The Strait of Hormuz, a key route for 20 per cent of global oil and gas, is a major sticking point in ongoing US-Iran talks in Islamabad. Earlier, the US military said two destroyers transited the Strait ahead of mine-clearing work. Iran's state media, however, said Iran forced a US military ship that was attempting to cross the Strait to turn around.

Israel slams Turkey's 'sham trials of its leadership'

Israel's Defence Minister, Israel Katz, on Sunday slammed Turkish President Erdogan after reports had emerged claiming that he had announced trials for Israel's military and political leadership. Katz accused Erdogan of being a "paper tiger" and underlined that Israel would continue to defend itself.

The Jerusalem Post reported on Sunday citing Turkish media that Turkey indicted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday along with 35 other Israeli officials, for the naval interception of the October 2025 "Sumud" Gaza flotilla, and was seeking up to 4,596 years in prison as punishment.

Pak to continue facilitating US-Iran talks: DyPM Dar

ISLAMABAD, 12 APRIL

Pakistan on Sunday said it will continue to facilitate talks between the US and Iran, while urging both sides to uphold the ceasefire.

In a brief statement to the media after marathon negotiations between the US and Iran ended without a breakthrough, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said Pakistan has helped mediate several rounds of "intense and constructive" discussions over the past 24 hours.

"I, along with the Defence Forces Army Chief Field Marshal Syed Sim Munir, helped mediate several rounds of intense and constructive negotiations between the two sides that continued through the last 24 hours and ended this morning," he said.

Expressing hope for progress, Dar said both sides should maintain a positive spirit to achieve durable peace and regional stability.

Dar said Pakistan would continue to play its role in facilitating engagement and dialogue between Iran and the United States in the coming days.

"Pakistan has been and will continue to play its role to facilitate engagements and dialogue between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the US in the days to come," Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said —*PTI*

US NAVY TO BEGIN A BLOCKADE ON SHIPS FROM ENTERING OR LEAVING HORMUZ: TRUMP

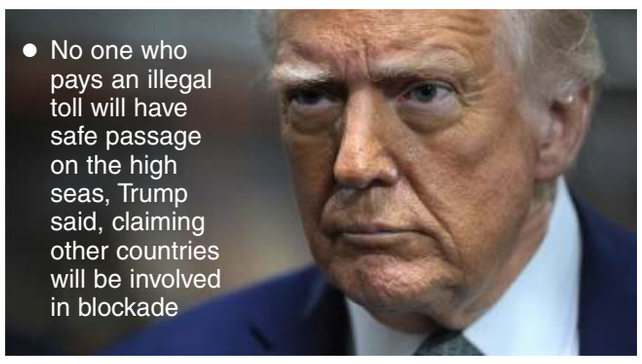
WASHINGTON, 12 APRIL

US President Donald Trump on Sunday announced that the US Navy would immediately begin a blockade on ships from entering or leaving the Strait of Hormuz, hours after the peace talks with Tehran failed on the issue of nuclear weapons.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump said he has directed the US Navy to seek and interdict every vessel in International Waters that has paid a toll to Iran.

"No one who pays an illegal toll will have safe passage on the high seas," the US President said, claiming that other countries will be involved in this blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial narrow waterway used to transport a fifth of the global oil supplies.

"They want money and, more importantly, they want Nuclear. Additionally and, at an appropriate moment, we



● No one who pays an illegal toll will have safe passage on the high seas, Trump said, claiming other countries will be involved in blockade

are fully "LOCKED AND LOADED," and our Military will finish up the little that is left of Iran," Trump said.

The US President said he was briefed by Vice President J D Vance, Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner on the talks with Iranian leaders in Islamabad.

"So, there you have it, the meeting went well, most points were agreed to, but the only point that really mattered, NUCLEAR, was not," Trump said.

Trump acknowledged the role played by Pakistan's Field Marshal Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in hosting the talks in Islamabad.

"They are very extraordinary men, and continuously thank me for saving 30 to 50 million lives in what would have been a horrendous War with India. I always appreciate hearing that — The amount of Humanity spoken of is incomprehensible," Trump said. —*PTI*

Cash-strapped Pak to get $5B from Saudi, Qatar

ISLAMABAD, 12 APRIL

Cash-strapped Pakistan is set to receive USD 5 billion in finan
cial support from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, providing a critical buffer for its fragile external position.

The expected inflows come as Islamabad prepares to repay USD 3.5 billion to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) this month and faces pressure on its foreign exchange reserves, the Dawn newspaper said.

Saudi Arabia and Qatar will provide USD 5 billion in financial assistance to Pakistan, the report said, quoting sources in the finance ministry.

The development coincides with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb's visit to Washington to attend the International Monetary Fund (IMF)-World Bank Spring Meetings.

Policymakers view these interactions as part of a broader strategic outreach, with indications that traditional factors such as strict programme conditionalities or reliance on third-party guarantors, including the UAE, may carry less weight in the current context.

The IMF has stipulated that Pakistan's three key bilateral creditors - Saudi Arabia, China and the UAE must maintain their cash deposits with the country until the completion of the ongoing three-year programme. UAE will be replaced by Qatar, the Dawn report said.

Aurangzeb met Saudi finance minister Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Jadaan in Islamabad, who also called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, reflecting continued support. —*PTI*

FOR LONG-TERM COMMUNICATION

China to resume ties with Taiwan including direct flights

BEIJING, 12 APRIL

China announced on Sunday it would resume certain ties with Taiwan, such as direct flights to mainland cities and imports of Taiwanese aquaculture products, following a visit by Taiwan's opposition leader. The Taiwan Work Office of China's Communist Party stated it would explore establishing a long-term communication mechanism with Taiwan's Kuomintang Party and facilitate the import of aquaculture products.

During a high-profile meeting Friday, Kuomintang leader Cheng Li-wun and China's President Xi Jinping called for peace without specifics. Taiwan is self-ruled, but China claims it as part of its territory. Relations have been tense since 2016, when Tsai Ing-wen from the Democratic Progressive Party was elected Taiwan's president. Since then, Beijing has suspended most official dialogue and increased military patrols near the island.

Chinese President Xi holds talks with Kuomintang (KMT) party leader Cheng Li-wun, third from left, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing —*PTI*

The statement also indicates China plans to resume direct flights to other mainland cities like Xi'an and Urumqi, though implementation details remain unclear. A bridge to link Taiwanese islands is also proposed. —*PTI*

China sets up new country near PoK, Afghan border

BEIJING, 12 APRIL

China has set up a new county in its volatile Xinjiang province near Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and the Afghanistan border to beef up security along the narrow Wakhan Corridor to curb infiltration of Uyghur separatist militants. The county, named Cenling, is located near the Karakoram mountain range, underscoring its strategic significance. This is the third new county established by China in Xinjiang, a predominantly Muslim Uyghur region, in just over a year. India had lodged a protest with China over the creation of Hean and Hekang counties, stating that parts of their jurisdiction fall within its union territory of Ladakh.

—*PTI*

US GETS BIGGEST VIVEKANANDA STATUE

A life-size bronze statue of Swami Vivekananda has been unveiled at Westlake Square in downtown Seattle, marking the first such installation of the Indian philosopher in the United States hosted by a city government. Sculpted by Indian artist Naresh Kumar Kumawat, the statue was unveiled on Saturday. Gifted by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), it is located near the Amazon headquarters 'Spheres', Seattle Convention Centre and Monorail, attracts over 4,00,000 visitors daily —*PTI*

TEST FOR TRUMP ALLY

Hungarians vote to unseat PM Orban

BUDAPEST, 12 APRIL

Hungarians were casting ballots Sunday in an election that could unseat populist Prime Minister Viktor Orban, an ally of US President Donald Trump, after 16 years in power.

It's a key moment for Orban, the European Union's longest-serving leader and one of its biggest antagonists, who has travelled a long road from being a liberal, anti-Soviet firebrand to the Russia-friendly nationalist.

Polls opened at 6am and were scheduled to close at 7pm. Orban and his top challenger, Peter Magyar cast their votes separate polling stations in Budapest.

Orban, 62, said the campaign had been "a great national moment on our side" and thanked activists and supporters for their work.

Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban prepares to cast his ballot at a polling station in Budapest on Sunday. —*PTI*

"I'm here to win," he said.

The election was being closely watched in countries around Europe and beyond, which is a testament to the outsize role Orban occupies in far-right populist politics worldwide.

Members of Trump's 'Make America Great Again' movement are among those who see Orban's government and his Fidesz political party as shining examples of conservative, anti-globalist politics in action, while he is reviled by advocates of liberal democracy and the rule of law.

Magyar said that the election was "a choice between East or West, propaganda or honest public discourse, corruption or clean public life."

Casting her ballot, retiree Eszter Szatmari, 62, said she felt the election was "basically our last chance to see anything vaguely resembling ... democracy in Hungary."

The voters' turn-out was 3.46 per cent in the first hour of the polls. It was nearly twice the turnout from the same period in the 2022 elections. —*PTI*

Russia accuses Ukraine of violating Easter truce

MOSCOW, 12 APRIL

Moscow on Sunday accused Ukraine of violating the Kremlin-declared 32-hour Orthodox Easter truce by targeting positions of Russian troops.

Russia recorded nearly two thousand ceasefire violations by Ukrainian forces during the initial 16 hours of the truce, the Russian Defence Ministry said.

Ukrainian forces reportedly attacked the positions of Russian troops three times from the Pokrovskoye.

The settlements of Gai were targeted twice in the ceasefire violations on 11 April, along with Otradnoye in the Dnepropetrovsk region.

All the attacks were repelled, it added.

"A total of 1,971 ceasefire violations by the Ukrainian forces were recorded between 4:00pm on April 11 and 8:00am on Sundat," the Defence Ministry said.

● Ukrainian forces reportedly attacked the positions of Russian troops three times from the Pokrovskoye.

Russian forces also thwarted four Ukrainian attempts to advance toward positions near Kondratovka and Novaya Sech in the Sumy Region, as well as Kaleniki in the Donetsk People's Republic.

The Ukrain's news portal UNIAN.NET reported ceasefire violations by Russian forces, including an attack on an ambulance in the Sumy region. Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the Easter truce on 9 April —*PTI*

Coal India absorbs cost surge to shield consumers

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

State-owned Coal India Limited is absorbing rising input costs to protect consumers from higher coal prices, even as expenses for key inputs, such as explosives and industrial diesel, have surged sharply following the West Asia conflict.

The company said it has chosen not to pass on the increase, warning that doing so could trigger a cascading impact across sectors reliant on coal.

Prices of ammonium nitrate - a key component accounting for about 60 per cent of explosives used in opencast mining - have risen 44 per cent to Rs 72,750 per tonne as of 1 April from pre-war levels. Coal India's subsidiaries consume about 0.9 million tonnes of explosives annually. This entire cost is being absorbed by Coal India, the company said. —*PTI*

Signature Global cuts net debt by 77% in FY26

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Realty firm Signature Global Ltd has reduced its net debt by 77 per cent in the last fiscal to Rs 200 crore on better cash flow.

According to its latest operational update, Signature Global's net debt was Rs 200 crore at the end of 2025-26 against Rs 880 crore as of 31 March, 2025.

Signature Global, which was the fifth-largest listed real estate firm in 2024-25 in terms of sales bookings, has a significant presence in Gurugram. Recently, Signature Global and RMZ group finalised their equal joint venture to develop a commercial project in Gurugram, with the latter infusing Rs 1,293 crore for a 50 per cent stake. The company would use part of this fund to pare debt. —*PTI*

Shell ramps up LNG supplies to India amid disruptions

The firm is importing its largest-ever monthly LNG in March

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Global energy major Shell plc has ramped up natural gas supplies to India in the wake of disruptions triggered by the West Asia conflict, leveraging its global liquefied natural gas (LNG) portfolio to capture a larger share of spot and term demand, including key fertiliser sector tenders.

Industry sources said Shell emerged as a leading supplier in last month's bulk LNG procurement by Indian fertiliser companies, securing a supply of 4 trillion British thermal units out of 6 TBtus volumes tendered, as the government moved to ensure feedstock availability for urea production amid constrained supplies from the Gulf.

With supplies from India's largest LNG supplier in Qatar disrupted by the West Asia conflict, Shell plc's India arm stepped in, importing its largest-ever monthly LNG volumes in March, they said.

Besides fertiliser, Shell India also supplied gas to other industrial users and retailers. In March, it became India's largest supplier of imported gas.

Shell's ability to step up supplies is backed by its 5 million tonnes-per-year LNG import terminal at Hazira in Gujarat and associated storage infrastructure, along with its position as the world's largest LNG portfolio player, allowing it to source cargoes from multiple regions beyond West Asia to meet demand.

Sources said the company leveraged its LNG portfolio in countries ranging from Oman to Australia and Nigeria. It also operates one of the largest LNG shipping fleets (over 65 chartered carriers), helping deliver gas when India's main supplier declared force majeure.

India imports roughly half of its natural gas requirement, which is used as feedstock for fertiliser production, power generation, CNG for transport, piped cooking gas for households and across a range of industrial applications.

As much as 45-50 per cent of LNG imports come from Qatar under long-term contracts. —*PTI*

99% EXPORTS WITH ZERO DUTY

India-UK trade pact likely to be effective from May

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

The India-UK free trade agreement, signed in July last year, is likely to come into force from the second week of May, according to an official.

India and the UK signed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), under which 99 per cent of Indian exports will enter the British market at zero duty, while tariffs on British products, such as cars and whisky, will be reduced in India.

The two countries have also signed the Double Contributions Convention (DCC) pact to ensure temporary workers would not have to duplicate social levies in either country.

The official said that both pacts are likely to be implemented in parallel.

CETA aims to double the USD 56 billion trade between the two economies by 2030.

While India has opened its market to various consumer goods, including chocolates, biscuits, and cosmetics, it will gain greater access to export products, such as textiles, footwear, gems and jewellery, sports goods, and toys.

Under the pact, tariffs on Scotch whisky will be reduced from 150 per cent to 75 per cent immediately, and further lowered to 40 per cent by 2035.

On automobiles, India will reduce import duties to 10 per cent over five years, down from the current rate of up to 110 per cent, under a gradually liberalised quota system.

In return, Indian manufacturers will gain access to the UK market for electric and hybrid vehicles within a quota framework —*PTI*

US-Iran talks, oil prices to dictate investors' sentiment

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

The talks between Iran and the US in Pakistan, which ended without a deal, would weigh heavily on investors' sentiment when markets open for trading on Monday, analysts said.

Crude oil prices would also dictate market trends in a holiday-shortened week ahead.

Markets had rallied last week following the US-Iran ceasefire and decline in crude oil prices to below the USD 100 mark. The BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 4,230.7 points, or 5.77 per cent, and the NSE Nifty surged 1,337.5 points, or 5.88 per cent.

"With negotiations ending without a resolution, markets are now bracing for a return of volatility that characterised earlier phases of the conflict," Hariprasad K, research analyst and founder, Livelong Wealth, said.

Benchmark indices may open with a significant gap down, potentially erasing a portion of the recent rally.

Stock markets would also track inflation data announcements, Q4 earnings and trading activity of foreign investors this week.

Foreign investors maintained their aggressive sell-off in Indian equities, withdrawing Rs 48,213 crore this month. —*PTI*

INDIA-US TIES MOST IMPORTANT

'India's growth huge chance for int'l partners'

NEW YORK, 12 APRIL

India's ambassador to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, stated that the nation's economic growth offers significant opportunities for international partners. He made these remarks on Saturday during a special address at Columbia University's Columbia Indian Economy Summit 2026, titled "The Quest for a Developed India."

Highlighting the importance of bilateral ties, Kwatra said the India-US partnership is "among the most important and most consequential" in advancing shared priorities and navigating evolving global shifts.

Kwatra said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump "have a leadership-level focus" in pushing forward the momentum of the bilateral relationship.

Underscoring the "salience and substance" of strong international partnerships, Kwatra said the India-US partnership spans government-to-government, government-to-business, business-to-business and people-to-people ties.

He expressed confidence that India will continue to drive economic growth and prosperity for its people while achieving the vision of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

"We in India are in a transformative phase of our journey, of our economic growth, the evolution of our society...

- Highlighting the importance of bilateral ties, Kwatra said the India-US partnership is "among the most important and most consequential" in advancing shared priorities and navigating evolving global shifts.

At the same time, we also live in a uniquely instructive phase of global shifts," the envoy said, reiterating that India remains confident in its priorities and firmly focused on attaining developed nation status by 2047.

He added that while India's growth is domestically driven, it must remain mindful of evolving global shifts. —*PTI*

Mcap of 8 top firms jumps by Rs 4.13 lakh crore

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

- HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro and Hindustan Unilever were the winners.

The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms surged by Rs 4,13,003.23 crore last week, with HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank emerging as the biggest gainers, in tandem with an optimistic trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 4,230.7 points or 5.77 per cent, and the NSE Nifty surged 1,337.5 points or 5.88 per cent.

"Sentiment remained buoyant amid a temporary US–Iran ceasefire, although geopolitical uncertainties capped the pace of gains," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Decline in crude oil prices below the USD 100 mark eased domestic concerns, triggering a strong rebound across markets.

HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro and Hindustan Unilever were the winners.

HDFC Bank added Rs 91,282.67 crore, taking its market valuation to Rs 12,47,478.57 crore, ICICI Bank jumped Rs 76,036.36 crore to Rs 9,46,741.85 crore and Bajaj Finance surged by Rs 60,980.35 crore to Rs 5,75,206.47 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Larsen & Toubro and Bharti Airtel zoomed by Rs 47,624.97 and Rs 45,873.43 crore respectively. However, the mcap of Infosys declined by Rs 3,285.03 crore and Reliance Industries diminished by Rs 947.28 crore. —*PTI*

FPIs withdraw ₹48,213 crore in just 10 days

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Foreign investors continued their aggressive sell-off of Indian equities, withdrawing Rs 48,213 crore (USD 5.14 billion) in just ten days this April due to waning risk appetite amid global uncertainties.

The sell-off follows a record outflow of Rs 1.17 lakh crore in March, the worst monthly exodus on record. The sharp reversal comes after foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) had infused Rs 22,615 crore in February, marking the highest monthly inflow in 17 months.

Market participants attributed the sustained selling pressure to a combination of global macroeconomic headwinds and heightened geopolitical risks. With the latest withdrawals, total outflows by FPIs have surged to Rs 1.8 lakh crore in 2026 so far. In April alone, foreign investors withdrew equities worth Rs 48,213 crore from the cash market till 10 April, according to NSDL data. —*PTI*

NCLAT backs project-specific insolvency for realty firms

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

- A two-member NCLAT bench, while deciding an appeal by Navin M Raheja, said jeopardising unrelated projects would not serve the interests of homebuyers and stakeholders elsewhere, making clear that the CIRP is to be ring-fenced project-wise.

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal has reaffirmed that insolvency proceedings initiated by homebuyers against realty firms must remain confined to the specific project where default has occurred and cannot extend to other projects of the corporate debtor.

The appellate tribunal highlighted that putting all other projects of the realty firms, which are unrelated to the default, is not in the interest of homebuyers and other stakeholders of other projects.

A two-member NCLAT bench, while deciding an appeal by Navin M Raheja, said jeopardising unrelated projects would not serve the interests of homebuyers and stakeholders elsewhere, making clear that the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) is to be ring-fenced project-wise.

The NCLAT had confined the ongoing CIRP of Raheja Developers to 'Krishna Housing Scheme' only.

The tribunal also directed the resolution professional "to issue a corrigendum" to the publication issued in 'Form-A' asking the stakeholders pertaining to the projectto submit the claim within 14 days.

Navin M Raheja has challenged an earlier order passed by the New Delhi Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal, which had admitted an application filed by several flat buyers.

The project was developed under the affordable housing framework, qualifying for Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Rinn Yojana benefits.

It had defaulted in completing the construction and delivering possession within a stipulated period. —*PTI*

'India's patent filings rise 30.2% to 1.43L in FY25-26'

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Filing of patent applications has increased by 30.2 per cent to 1,43,729 in 2025-26 against 1,10,375 in the previous fiscal, on account of several initiatives taken by the government to strengthen the intellectual property rights ecosystem, Commerce and Industry Minister **Piyush Goyal** said on Sunday.

India is the world's 6th largest patent filer.

"Our patent filings soared to a historic 1.43 lakh+ in FY 2025-26, marking a 30.2 per cent increase over last year. With over 69 per cent of patents filed domestically, led by innovators from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Maharashtra, we are showing the world that Made in India is powered by Invented in India," Goyal said.

The filings have been continuously increasing since 2016-17, when they were 45,444.

It was 47,894 in 2027-28, 50,660 in 2018-19, 56,268 in 2019-20, 58,503 in 2020-21, 66,440 in 2021-22, 82,208 in 2022-23, and 92,163 in 2023-24.

The government has undertaken several measures to strengthen the patent ecosystem in the country, particularly aimed at startups, educational institutions and MSMEs. —*PTI*

HIRING BASED ON DEMAND

TCS makes 25,000 offers to freshers this fiscal: CEO

MUMBAI, 12 APRIL

TCS has made 25,000 offers to freshers for the current fiscal, and pointed out that the demand scenario will determine whether it hires more college graduates, a top official has said.

The largest information technology services company had hired 44,000 freshers in FY26, one of the highest by any private sector employer in the country, despite the headwinds it faced.

"We have made 25,000 offers to freshers for FY27. Clarity on demand will lead to more hiring," its chief executive and managing director K Krithivasan told PTI in an interview over the weekend.

When asked if the company will up its dependence on lateral hires and if the delivery model has undergone any change, he replied in the negative.

Explaining that it takes up to nine months of training before a fresher comes on the floor, while a lateral can deliver immediately, he said, adding that business needs will influence its hiring strategies.

The company has been hiring 40,000 or more freshers every fiscal year for at least three years now.

When asked if there is a possibility of another round of restructuring like the one in FY26, when it laid off at least 12,000 staffers, Krithivasan limited himself to saying that people can have "thriving careers" with the company till they perform well.

Denying that the ingress of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies had anything to do with the layoffs last year, Krithivasan said TCS had to let go of people, mostly senior-level talent, because the style of executing projects had changed of late, and the senior layer was no longer required. —*PTI*

From police stations to restaurants: IGL expands PNG in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

From police stations to fast-food outlets, Indraprastha Gas Ltd is expanding its push for piped natural gas (PNG) connections in Delhi-NCR as it looks to rapidly expand its user base to ease pressure on LPG, Chief Executive Kamal Kishore Chatiwal said.

Following disruptions to energy supplies from the West Asia conflict, the government is pushing wider adoption of PNG as a convenient alternative to LPG, given its more diversified sourcing and lower dependence on the Gulf region.

IGL is also providing PNG connections to every police station in Delhi, eliminating the hassle of refills. —*PTI*

Buttler, Gill guide GT to 7-wicket win over LSG

Buttler grabbed with both hands the life offered by Pant

LUCKNOW, 12 APRIL

Skipper Shubman Gill and Jos Buttler backed up Prasidh Krishna's excellent four-wicket burst with flamboyant half-centuries, guiding the Gujarat Titans to a comfortable seven-wicket win over the Lucknow Super Giants in an Indian Premier League match here on Sunday.

Prasidh shone bright with figures of 4 for 24 as GT restricted LSG to 164 for eight, and then the visitors rode on Gill (56) and Buttler (60) to chase down the target with eight balls to spare. The Titans made 165 for three.

GT started brightly with Gill and Sai Sudharsan stitching 45 runs off 31 balls before the latter was dismissed by Digvesh Rathi, caught by Avesh Khan at fine leg.

Buttler grabbed with both hands the life offered to him by LSG skipper Rishabh Pant. The Englishman was dropped by the wicketkeeper off Rathi in the eighth over.

Thereafter, it was Gill and Buttler's show, as the duo dismantled the LSG attack with brute force.

The duo shared 85 runs for the second wicket off just 58 balls and took the attack to the opposition bowlers.

It was a double blow for GT as Buttler departed an over later while trying to hit a slower delivery from Mohammed Shami out of the park, brilliantly caught by Aiden Markram at long-on boundary.

But Washington Sundar (21 not out) and Rahul Tewatia (10 not out) anchored GT home from there.

Earlier sent into bat, Markram made 30 off 21 balls, but Mitchell Marsh (11), Pant (18), and Ayush Badoni (9) failed to live up to the expectations.

Markram started on a bright note, finding the fence at will from the word go, and decorated his innings with five boundaries and one six.

Markram, though, continued his attacking game, finding the fence at will. LSG were dealt a body blow when Pant was dismissed by Mohammed Siraj in the fifth over as the left-hander scooped a catch to Tewatia at mid-off in search of a big shot. Markram smashed Prasidh for back-to-back boundaries in the seventh over before the bowler had the last laugh as the South African's short-arm jab was pounced by Washington Sundar at cow corner.

Gujarat Titans 165 for 3 (Buttler 60, Gill 56) beat Lucknow Super Giants 164 for 8 (Markram 30, Prasidh 4-28) by seven wickets. *—PTI*

RR's juggernaut takes on under-pressure Hyderabad

HYDERABAD, 12 APRIL

A rampant Rajasthan Royals will look to tighten their grip on the top spot when they face an inconsistent Sunrisers Hyderabad in an Indian Premier League clash here on Monday.

The Royals have been the standout side this season, ticking almost every box with authority. Four commanding wins in as many games have underlined their dominance, powered by a destructive top order and a vastly improved bowling attack. At the heart of their success is the explosive opening pair of Yashasvi Jaiswal and teen sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, who have consistently dismantled opposition attacks in the Powerplay.

Jaiswal's elegance, combined with Sooryavanshi's fearless strokeplay, has made them one of the most feared duos this season. At number three, Dhruv Jurel has added stability, stitching partnerships, and ensuring the early momentum is not lost. The middle order, led by skipper Riyan Parag, remains largely untested, though it has not maximised the limited chances it has had so far, perhaps the only minor concern in an otherwise dominant campaign. But what has truly marked RR's transformation is their bowling. After finishing ninth last season due to a lack of penetration, they have returned as a far more disciplined and threatening unit. Jofra Archer has spearheaded the attack with pace and precision, while Nandre Burger has added bite with the new ball, using his left-arm angle and bounce to unsettling effect. Sandeep Sharma and Tushar Deshpande have complemented them well.

In the middle overs, Ravi Bishnoi has been the go-to wicket-taker, leading the charts with nine scalps, while the inclusion of Ravindra Jadeja has further deepened their spin arsenal.

In contrast, Sunrisers Hyderabad have blown hot and cold, struggling for consistency despite flashes of brilliance. Having lost three of their four games, the former champions sit in sixth place.The match starts at 7:30 pm IST. *—PTI*

Rana fined 25% match fee for arguing with umpire

Delhi Capitals batter Nitish Rana has been fined 25 per cent of his match fee for an intense altercation with the fourth umpire during their Indian Premier League match against Chennai Super Kings here. The incident occurred in the 19th over when the umpire denied Tristan Stubbs' request to change his wet gloves, leading to a heated dispute. Stubbs asked to change his gloves due to heavy perspiration in Chennai's humidity on Saturday. After his dismissal, a frustrated Rana confronted the fourth umpire, for which he was also handed a demerit point. "Nitish Rana, batter, Delhi Capitals, has been fined 25% of his match fee and has also accumulated 1 demerit point for breaching Level 1 of the IPL's Code of Conduct for Players," IPL said in a statement.

Bhinder breaches ACU protocol, BCCI to 'examine matter'

Rajasthan Royals' long-time team manager Romi Bhinder has courted controversy after TV cameras caught him using a mobile phone in the team dugout during their IPL match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru. The BCCI has taken note of the matter, and secretary Devajit Saikia said the veracity of the incident will be probed by the board before reaching any "conclusion". "We need to thoroughly examine where exactly the event happened and whether the phone was used. We will conduct an internal examination before reaching a logical conclusion. We will check the video footage and gather evidence before reaching any conclusion," Saikia told PTI.The footage of the incident was first shared on Instagram by a social media influencer, and it has been ascertained that Bhinder was indeed using a mobile phone with teen sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi sitting beside him during the Royals' six-wicket win in Guwahati on Friday.

-PTI

Kapil becomes youngest Indian Int'l Master norm holder

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Delhi-based 10-year-old Aarit Kapil became the youngest Indian chess player to make an International Master norm after he drew with Samuel Asaka of Australia in the final round of an international tournament at Menorca in Spain. After a brilliant start that included a victory over former world under-20 champion and Grandmaster Nogerbek Kazybek of Kazakhstan in the second round, Aarit, who is just 10 years and seven months old, became the youngest Indian to hold an IM norm. Stepping into the shoes of ace Indians like D Gukesh, Arjun, and R Praggnanandhaa might be some time away, but with his sheer talent, Aarit has shown that he could be the next big thing in Indian chess with his performance in Spain.*—PTI*

Sawan Barwal breaks oldest National Record by two seconds in men's marathon

SHIMLA, 12 APRIL

Growing up in the village of Radabhanker, situated in the rolling hills of Himachal's Mandi district, Sawan Barwal didn't have very lofty ambitions when he started running. It's not rare to find scores of runners pounding the mountain trails early in the morning in this part of the country. It's something most young men do in this region in preparation for Army recruitment.

Sawan, though, wasn't even thinking of that. "A lot of children from my area run because they want to prepare for the Army bharti (recruitment). But when I started running in school, it was just because I enjoyed running. At first, I was just happy to run. Then slowly, as I improved, my goals got bigger. I wanted to win a school medal, then a district medal, then a state medal, and a national medal, and then become an international athlete. Every time I won a medal, I kept thinking what I could accomplish next," Sawan told.

On Sunday morning in Rotterdam, the 28-year-old got his biggest accomplishment yet. Competing in the Rotterdam marathon, Sawan crossed the finish line in a time of 2:11:58. In doing so, he had broken the longest-standing record in Indian track and field, Shivnath Singh's men's marathon record of 2:12:00 set in 1978. *—PTI*

LINZ OPEN

Mirra Andreeva fights back to beat Potapova in final

PARIS, 12 APRIL

Top seed Mirra Andreeva overcame a first-set wobble to clinch her second title of the year, beating local favourite Anastasia Potapova 1-6, 6-4, 6-3 to win the Linz Open on Sunday. Russian Andreeva, who won the Adelaide International in January, has now won five WTA titles after breaking a claycourt title drought stretching back to 2024 ahead of next month's French Open.

Andreeva made 14 unforced errors in the first set, twice as many as Potapova, who broke Andreeva twice to build a 4-1 lead and secured the set when the world number 10's forehand hit the net.

But Andreeva, a former French Open semifinalist, became more aggressive in the second set, getting two breaks in a row to go 3-2 up before sealing the set with an ace.

World number 97 Potapova, born in Russia and looking to win the Linz Open for the second time, continued to make unforced errors, and 18-year-old Andreeva served accurately to close out the win. *—PTI*

Russia's Mirra Andreeva celebrates with the trophy as Austria's Anastasia Potapova celebrates with the runners-up trophy *–PTI*

Asian Wrestling C'ships: India sign off with two silver

AUGUSTA, 12 APRIL

Paris Olympics bronze medallist Aman Sehrawat (61kg) and Mukul Dahiya (86kg) bagged silver medals, while Dinesh (125kg) claimed a bronze at the Asian wrestling championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on Sunday.

Aman, who jumped from his regular 57kg to 61kg, was beaten 13-10 by young North Korean Kim Kwang Myong, while Mukul was pinned by Iranian Kamran Ghasempour in their respective finals.

Dinesh outwitted home favourite Arslanbek Turdubekov 12-1 in a bronze medal contest. With two gold, three silver and two bronze medals, India finished second behind Iran in freestyle. *—PTI*

-PTI

Paris Marathon: Crippa, Shure claim victories

PARIS, 12 APRIL

Italy's Yemaneberhan Crippa won the Paris marathon on Sunday, while Ethiopia's Shure Demise claimed victory in the women's category in a new course record. The Ethiopian-born Crippa, 29, clocked a personal best of 2hr 05min 16sec for the win in the French capital. Bayelign Teshager of Ethiopia finished second, just five seconds off Crippa, with Kenya's Sila Kiptoo rounding off the podium (2:05:26). The women's race saw 30-year-old Demise smash the course record by more than a minute. She won in 2:18:33, ahead of compatriot Misgane Alemayehu (2:19:06) and Kenya's Magdalyne Masai (2:19:18).*—PTI*

Rory McIlroy's 6-stroke lead has vanished

AUGUSTA, 12 APRIL

It wasn't the course that caught up to Rory McIlroy in the third round of the Masters as much as it was the rest of the field. And perhaps his wayward driver.

McIlroy finally left an opening, and several other players charged back into contention in the third round, setting up a potentially pulsating Sunday finish at Augusta National, where McIlroy and Cameron Young share the lead, but six other players are now within four shots.

"The course was obviously gettable," McIlroy said after his third-round 73 cost him what a six-stroke lead through 36 holes.

"There were a lot of good scores out there, and obviously, the quality of the chasing pack is obvious. There were a lot of guys who shot good scores."

Saturday's average score of 70.63 was the lowest in Masters history in a third round. But McIlroy ranks dead last in driving accuracy among the post-cut field, and that made it hard for him to continue the run of birdies that built his big lead Friday. *—PTI*

Badminton Asia C'ships: Ayush Shetty loses to Shi Yuqi in final

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Ayush Shetty was denied a fairytale ending by China's Shi Yuqi at the Badminton Asia Championships 2026 as the Indian lost 8-21, 10-21 in 42 minutes to the home favourite in the final in Ningbo on Sunday, thus finishing with a silver medal.

World No. 2 Yuqi dominated the majority of the match, stretching his head-to-head advantage over the 20-year-old Indian to 3-0. The Chinese shuttler also bagged his maiden gold at the continental event, having previously won three bronze medals. Barring the loss in the summit clash, it was a memorable week for World No. 25 Ayush who became the seventh Indian to win a men's singles medal at the event after Dinesh Khanna (gold in 1965 and bronze in 1969), Suresh Goel (bronze in 1965), Prakash Padukone (bronze in 1976), Pullela Gopichand (bronze in 2000), Anup Sridhar (bronze in 2007) and H. S. Prannoy (bronze in 2018).

Ayush, the 2023 BWF World Junior Championships bronze medallist, had reached the final by stunning defending champion and World No. 1 Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand 10-21, 21-19, 21-17 in the semi finals. *—PTI*

-PTI

INDIA GETS SAVITA BOOST

Unwell Salima to miss Argentina tour

BUENOS AIRES, 12 APRIL

Star goalkeeper and former captain Savita Punia will return to the national women's hockey team after 10 months, but indisposed skipper Salima Tete will be missing from action when India takes on Argentina in the first game of the four-match series, here on Monday.

Savita has not competed since June 2025 as she took a break from the game due to personal reasons. Salima, a quality midfielder, is still recovering from a bout of chicken pox.

The tour will serve as the ideal preparation for India ahead of the FIH Nations Cup, the FIH Hockey World Cup Belgium & Netherlands 2026, and the Asian Games later this year.

Ahead of the tour, the Indian women's team trained in Bengaluru before departing for Argentina on Thursday evening. Having finished as runners-up at World Cup Qualifiers 2026 held in Hyderabad, the team will be looking to carry that momentum forward into the tour and the rest of the year.

Experienced forward Navneet Kaur will serve as the captain of the team during the tour in the absence of Salima. Navneet had recently won the Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr Award for Player of the Year for her consistent performance.

The return of veteran Indian goalkeeper Savita Punia will be a huge boost, with Bichu Devi Kharibam expected to share goalkeeping duties with her. *—PTI*

Savita Punia and Salima Tete *–PTI*

Elsinho out for rest of ISL 2025-26 season

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Chennaiyin FC's defender Elsinho has been ruled out for the rest of the Indian Super League (ISL) 2025-26 season after sustaining a knee injury during his side's 1-3 loss against East Bengal on Saturday.

In a statement on social media on Sunday, the club said, "Chennaiyin FC can confirm that Elsinho sustained a knee injury during our match against East Bengal FC."

"He has been diagnosed with a ruptured Medial Patellofemoral Retinaculum (MPFL) & will be ruled out for the remainder of the season," it added. *—PTI*